THE

Biſhop of *LONDON*'s

Third Paſtoral Letter

TO THE

PEOPLE

OF HIS

DIOCESE;

Particularly, to thoſe of the two great Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.

Occaſion'd by the Suggeſtions of Infidels againſt the Writings of the NEW TESTAMENT, conſider'd as a *Divine* Rule of *Faith* and *Manners*.

The FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed by SAM. BUCKLEY in *Amen-Corner*. 1731. Price 1 *s*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The BISHOP of *London*'s

Third Paſtoral Letter, &c.

Occaſion'd by the Suggeſtions of Infidels againſt the Writings of the NEW TESTAMENT, *conſider'd as a* Divine *Rule of* Faith *and* Manners.

IN my two former Letters, I have laid before you the Evidences of the Chriſtian Religion, as drawn from the Accounts which the Evangeliſts give us of our Saviour Chriſt, *viz.* 'The general *Expectation* of the Meſſiah at that Time, ariſing from the Prophecies concerning him; 'The many and great *Miracles* which he wrought, in confirmation of his Doctrine and Miſſion; 'His *Predictions* of ſeveral very remarkable Events, which were afterwards punctually fulfill'd; and, 'The wonderful *Propagation* of the Goſpel after his Death, againſt all the Powers of the World, and the Luſts, Paſſions, and Prejudices of Mankind. To theſe I have added the Evidences of the great *Need* there was of ſuch a Revelation

First Paſt. Lett. p. 22.

Second Paſt. Lett. p. 14.

lation from God; conſidering the groſs Ignorance and Corruption of Manners into which the World was ſunk, and the Inability of the Philoſophers to enlighten and reform it. And this led me to lay before you the *Excellency* of the Chriſtian Inſtitution for the effecting what the Philoſophers could not effect; 'The great Advantage of a *Divine Authority*, to *aſcertain* the Duties and Doctrines it lays down; 'The *Purity* of its Precepts, ſo much higher and more perfect, than thoſe which meer Morality preſcrib'd; 'The natural *Tendency* of them to fit and prepare the Soul for the ſpiritual Exerciſes of the next Life; 'The *ſtrict* Reſtraints which the Goſpel lays upon irregular Enjoyments of all kinds, not only in the *outward* Acts, but the *inward* Imaginations and Deſires; 'The *full* Aſſurance it gives of future Rewards and Puniſhments to *excite* us to Obedience, and the ſupernatural Aſſiſtance it promiſes, to *enable* us to obey; 'The Peace and Satisfaction it affords the Mind, by diſcovering a *plain* and *certain* Method of obtaining the Pardon of Sin, and thereby ſecuring the Love and Favour of God; 'The ſolid Foundation it lays for Eaſe and Comfort under all the Calamities of Life, and more eſpecially for Patience, Reſignation and Conſtancy under Sufferings and Perſecutions *for Righteouſneſs-ſake*; 'The Means it provides for preſerving an habitual Senſe of God and Religion upon the Minds of Men, by the Appointment of a Miniſtry, and Ordinances, and publick Aſſemblies, for that End; and, upon the whole, 'The Perfection and Happineſs to which it advances human Nature, both in this Life, and the next, far beyond any thing that the meer

Second Paſt. Lett. p. 51.

natural

natural Powers of Body and Mind could have diſcover'd and attain'd to.

And as a *Conſequence* of the clear and undoubted Evidences of our Saviour's Miſſion and Authority, and of the Excellency of the Goſpel-Inſtitution; I have further ſhown the indiſpenſable Obligation we are under to *attend* to it and *embrace* it; together with the Folly, Perverſeneſs and Sinfulneſs of not embracing it, and much more of *deſpiſing* and *rejecting* it. Second Paſt. Lett. P. 73.

Since therefore both the *Evidences* and the *Excellency* of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, and of the whole Work of our Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, are ſo fully and clearly laid down in the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, from whence I drew my Accounts of them; Infidelity can have no poſſible Refuge, but in a downright Diſbelief of the *Truth* and *Authority* of thoſe Writings; either as forg'd from the Beginning or convey'd to us with great Corruptions; or as containing Facts related by Perſons who had no Credit and Doctrines deliver'd by thoſe who had no Authority. This is the Refuge to which it was eaſily foreſeen the Infidels of our Age muſt have their final Recourſe, to juſtify their rejecting the Doctrine of our Redemption by Chriſt, and their avow'd Diſregard of the Writings of the *New Teſtament* further than as they contain ſuch moral Precepts, as Natural Reaſon might ſuggeſt and ſuch as may in their Opinion be learnt as well, if not better, from Heathen Writers. As it is impoſſible to maintain that Scheme, on Suppoſition that thoſe Writings are true and genuin, and that the Doctrines contain'd in them ſubſiſt upon a divine Author- Ibid. p. 52.

rity;

rity; the Patrons of it muſt of neceſſity be driven to deny one or other of thoſe Aſſertions, if not both. The *Conſequence* on each ſide is clear and undoubted: If the Writings of the *New Teſtament* be not authentick (*i. e.* either the Writings not genuin, or the Authority not Divine,) the Infidel-Scheme is well founded; but, on the other hand, if they be authentick in both thoſe reſpects, Chriſtianity ſtands unſhaken and immoveable, and all Pretences either that it is not well-founded, or that it is no more than meer Morality, muſt fall to the Ground.

Page 21. 22. This is a Point which I *touch'd upon* in my firſt Paſtoral Letter. But ſince that Time, the Patrons of Infidelity have told us openly and without reſerve, how little they conſider the Scriptures as a Rule to Men, either of Belief or Practice. They plead for the reading them with ſuch *Freedom*, as to *aſſent or diſſent, juſt as* they judge *it agrees or diſagrees with the Light of* Nature *and the* Reaſon *of Things*; and commend thoſe as the only wiſe Men, who *believe not the Doctrines, becauſe contain'd in Scripture, but the Scripture on account of the Doctrines*; who *admit not any of it's Doctrines without an Examination* by that Rule; who *admit* ſuch Things for *divine Scripture*, as [they being Judges] *tend to the Honour of God and the Good of Men, and nothing elſe*; and, who *do not admit any thing to be writ by divine Inſpiration, tho' it occurs ever ſo often in Scripture, till they are certain it will bear the Teſt* they lay down. They inſiſt further, how eaſily Mankind may be *impos'd on* in the point of *Revelation*; and how little Certainty there is or can be, that any Revelation *has been conveyd*

Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, p. 201.

— p. 371.

— p. 192.

— p. 328.

— p 185.

vey'd entire to diſtant Times and Places; and they reſt much upon the great Number *of various Readings in the Copies of the New Teſtament*, as rendring it uncertain to us what the true Text was; and alledge, That *no Court of Judicature admits of a Copy, tho' taken from the Original, without Oath made by a diſintereſted Perſon, of his having compar'd it with the Original*; from whence they conclude, how unreaſonable it is *abſolutely to depend, in Things of the greateſt Moment, on voluminous Writings, which have been ſo often tranſcrib'd by Men who never ſaw the Original.*

Page 284, 324. —p. 324.

Theſe, and others of the like Tendency, are the Principles which the Infidels of our Age are openly and avowedly advancing; that by deſtroying the Credit of the Holy Scriptures, they may make way for their own Scheme of Natural Religion. And there are alſo others among us, who tho' they do not diſpute our receiving the *four Goſpels* as a Rule of Faith and Practice, will not agree that the *other* Books of the *New Teſtament* have a Right to be conſider'd as part of that Rule; but, on the contrary, have taken great pains to repreſent ſome of thoſe Books as of doubtful Credit.

Since therefore thoſe Sacred Writings, as having all of them the Stamp of divine Authority, are the great Charter of Chriſtians, upon the *Validity* of which their Faith and their Hope are built; to the end that thoſe whom the Providence of God has plac'd under my Care, may be arm'd in all Points againſt the Attempts of Infidelity and every Approach to it, I have judg'd it expedient to enter into that Matter more fully and diſtinctly, in order to give you a clear View of the Evidences both of the *Truth* and the *Authority* of thoſe Writings.

Writings. And this I conſider, as in ſome ſort a *Duty* incumbent upon me. For having ſhown you in my Second Letter the *Inſufficiency* of Reaſon in this corrupt State to be your Guide in Matters of Religion, it may well be expected, that I alſo ſhow you what is a *ſufficient* Guide, and where the Directions are to be found, which will acquaint you with the certain Way to Salvation, and upon which you may ſecurely depend, as being the Guide which God himſelf has given you. And this will be effectually done, by making good the following Poſitions:

I. The four Goſpels contain a *faithful* and *true* Account of the Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

II. The whole Scheme of Chriſtianity or the Goſpel Diſpenſation, was not fully open'd to the World by Chriſt himſelf immediately, in the courſe of his Miniſtry; but many Things were left by him to be deliver'd or explain'd by his *Apoſtles*, whom he particularly Inſtructed and Commiſſion'd for that End.

III. The Apoſtles, in virtue of their Commiſſion from Chriſt, being not only to teſtify and deliver to the World the Things which they had ſeen and had been taught by him, but *further* to open and explain the Goſpel Diſpenſation; were *under the Guidance and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt*, which they receiv'd, according to his Promiſe, before they enter'd upon their Miniſtry.

IV. What the Things are, relating to the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, which the Apoſtles were to open and explain, purſuant to the Commiſſion and Inſtruction receiv'd from Chriſt and under the Guidance and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; muſt,

muſt, in conjunction with the Goſpels, be learnt from their Preaching and Writings, as deliver'd to us in their *Acts* and *Epiſtles*.

V. The Books of the *New Teſtament*, in which the Doctrines deliver'd by Chriſt and his Apoſtles are contain'd, have been faithfully *tranſmitted* to the Chriſtians of ſucceeding Ages.

VI. The Doctrines of the Apoſtles, contained in their *Epiſtles* and in the *Acts*, together with what is taught by our Saviour in the *Goſpels*, were *deſign'd* to be a ſtanding Rule of *Faith* and *Manners* to Chriſtians in all Ages, and were from the Beginning conſider'd and receiv'd as ſuch, by the Churches of Chriſt.

1. *The* four Goſpels *contain a faithful and true Account of the Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt.* When we would be ſatisfied concerning the Truth of any Hiſtory, the two Things we chiefly enquire after, are, The Knowledge the Writer had of his Subject, and the Character he bore in Point of Integrity; the firſt, to convince us that he could not be impoſed upon himſelf, and the ſecond, that he had no Inclination or Deſign to impoſe upon others. Now, that there was ſuch a Perſon as *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, who lived at the Time the Goſpels ſpeak of, and who made choice of ſeveral Perſons to be his Diſciples, are Facts, which the greateſt Enemies of Chriſtianity have never denied; and if they had denied them, they would have been effectually confuted by Writers of undoubted Credit, who lived at the Time, and in the Age which immediately followed. Of theſe Diſciples in general, it is affirmed, and has never been denied or queſtioned, That they left their

ſeveral Callings and Occupations, to the end they might be wholly at Liberty to attend Je-
Mark iii. 14. ſus, and receive his Inſtructions: *He ordain'd twelve, that they ſhould be with him*; who,
Acts i. 21. with others, accompanied him *all the Time that he went in and out among them*; *beginning from the Baptiſm of John, unto the ſame Day that he was taken up from them:* And hav-
Joh. xv. 27. ing been *with him from the Beginning*, they were well qualified to *bear Witneſs* of the Things that were done and ſpoken by him. And what we find particularly declared by one, might be truly ſaid by all of them, where-ever
1 Joh. i. 1. they preached, '*That which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled, declare we unto you.* The Things they recorded as ſaid and done by Chriſt, they heard from his own Mouth, and ſaw with their own Eyes, and did not deliver them upon the Report of others. Nor did they only ſee him, ſo as to have a *tranſient* View of him; but they *look'd upon him*, and had long-continued Views of him, and converſed familiarly with him. And, that their *Eyes* might not be deceived, either with Regard to his Perſon or Miracles, they not only touched, but *handled*; their own Hands diſtributed the Loaves; and after his Reſurrection, they were all directed, not only
Luk. xxiv. 39. to *behold his Hands and his Feet*, to ſatisfy them that it was he himſelf, but alſo to *handle* him, that they might be thoroughly convinc'd that he had Fleſh and Bones, and ſo could not be a Spirit, as they at firſt ſuſpected. And one of them, who was more diſtruſtful than the
Joh. xx. 27. reſt, was commanded even to *thruſt his Hand* into the Wound in his Side.

The

The ſame Perſons who were thus prepared, by all *ordinary* and *natural* Qualifications, to give an Account of the Life and Actions of Chriſt, received alſo a *ſupernatural* Aſſiſtance for the Work, by his ſending the Holy Ghoſt, for this among other Ends, *that he might bring all Things to their* Remembrance, *whatſoever he had ſaid unto them.* And two of theſe, ſo enabled by all Helps natural and ſupernatural, wrote two of the Goſpels, namely *Matthew* and *John.* As to *Mark* and *Luke*, the other two Evangeliſts; it is affirmed by ſome of the Ancients, that they were two of the Seventy Diſciples, whom our Lord *ſent before his Face to every City and Place whither he himſelf would come*; to whom he gave Power to *heal the Sick*, and to caſt out *Devils*; and ſaid to them, as he had done to the twelve Apoſtles, *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* But however that be; after our Saviour's Aſcenſion we find them expreſly mentioned as Fellow-Labourers with St. *Paul*, to whom the whole Goſpel had been immediately revealed from Heaven, and one of them with St. *Peter*, whom Chriſt choſe to be with him in the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of *Mark*, as his *Fellow-Labourer* in the Goſpel, whom we accordingly find with him when he wrote his Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians* and that to *Philemon*; and when he commands *Timothy* to come to him, he directs him *to take* Mark *and bring him with him, as one profitable to him in the Miniſtry.* St. *Peter* mentions him in his firſt Epiſtle, as then with him, and alſo calls him *his Son*; a Name, which we find applied in the New Teſtament to thoſe

Luk. x. 1, 9, 16, 17.

Col. iv. 10, 11. Phil. 24.

2 Tim. iv. 11.

1 Pet. v. 13.

whom the Apoſtles had inſtructed in the Faith and converted, and to thoſe who laboured with them in inſtructing and converting others; for in this Senſe, St. *Paul* ſays of *Timothy*, *As a Son with the Father, he hath* ſerved *with me in the Goſpel*; and of *Titus*, *Mine own* Son *after the common Faith*. *Luke* alſo is called by St. *Paul* his *Fellow-Labourer*; whom we find accompanying him in his Travels, and particularly to have been with him when he wrote his Epiſtles to the *Coloſſians*, to *Timothy*, and to *Philemon*.

Phil. ii. 22.
Tit. i. 4.
Philem. ℣. 24.
Acts x. 10.
Col. iv. 14.
2 Tim. iv. 11.
Philem. 24.

Accordingly, the Accounts which the Ancients give of thoſe two Goſpels and the Writers of them, are as follows. *Irenæus* ſays, 'That *Mark*, the Diſciple and Interpreter of *Peter*, committed thoſe Things to Writing which had been related to him by *Peter*, and that *Luke*, the Companion of *Paul*, recorded in a Book the Goſpel which *Paul* preached.' And elſewhere, he ſays of St. *Luke*, 'That he was an inſeparable Companion of St. *Paul*, and his Fellow-Labourer in the Goſpel.' *Tertullian* ſays, 'That the Goſpel which *Mark* publiſhed, is affirmed to be *Peter*'s, whoſe *Interpreter* he was [as writing in *Greek* what he heard St. *Peter* deliver to the *Jews* in their own Language] and that which was drawn up by *Luke*, is aſcribed to *Paul*.' *Euſebius* relates, upon the Authority of more ancient Writers, 'That the Chriſtians at *Rome* prevailed with *Mark* to ſet down in writing the Doctrine which *Peter* had preach'd; and that afterwards *Peter* confirmed it, and authoriſed it to be publickly read in their Aſſemblies.' And elſewhere, from *Origen*, 'The ſecond Goſpel is that of *Mark*, who ſet it down as it was delivered

Iren. l. 3. c. 1.
Iren. l. 3. c. 14.
Tertull. contra Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.
Euſeb. l. 2. cap. 15.
Euſeb. l. 6. c. 25.

livered to him by *Peter*; and the third, that of *Luke*, which is commended by St. *Paul*.' To theſe we muſt add what the ſame *Euſebius* ſays, as handed down by Tradition to his Time, 'That St. *John* approved the three other Goſpels, and gave his Teſtimony to the Truth of them.' And, 'That Copies of theſe Holy Goſpels were with great Zeal conveyed to remote Countries, by thoſe who ſucceeded the Apoſtles in the Propagation of the Chriſtian Faith:' and they were read in the publick Aſſemblies and received as the *Foundation* of that Faith; without the leaſt Mark of Diſtinction in Point of *Authority*.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 24.

Ibid. c. 37.

Juſt. Mart. Apol. 2. Iren. l. 3. c. 11, 12.

Thus ſtands the Evidence of the Truth of the Goſpel-Hiſtory, with regard to the exact Knowledge the Writers had of their Subject; which ſhows that they were not impoſed upon themſelves. And if it ſhall alſo appear that they were Perſons of Integrity, and had no Inclination or Deſign to impoſe upon others, the Evidence is as complete, as can well be given of any ancient Facts whatſoever. With this View, let us conſider, 'The Character and Condition of the Perſons, and 'The Time and Manner of their Writing; with other Circumſtances, from whence we may judge whether or no they are attended with any Marks or Suſpicions of *Fraud* or *Deſign*.

So far were the Perſons from being artful or deſigning Men, that they were reproach'd by the Enemies of Chriſtianity, as rude and mean, ſimple and illiterate; and ſo far were they from having any worldly Views of Profit, or Pleaſure, or Honour, after they ſet out on the Work of propagating the Goſpel; that Perſecution, Affliction, and Reproach, were almoſt the

the conſtant Attendants of the Propagators of it. As to the *Time*, they wrote and publiſhed their Goſpels while the Matters were freſh in Memory, and while many Perſons were living who wanted not Inclination to detect them, if they could have been convicted of Falſhood. And as to their *Manner* of Writing, it is plain, open, and undiſguiſed; free from all Appearance of Art or Contrivance, and carries in it this Signal Teſtimony of Truth and Impartiality, that they freely confeſs and record the Failings and Weakneſſes of themſelves and their Brethren, *viz.* The frequent Rebukes they received from their Maſter for their Ignorance and Slowneſs of Underſtanding; Their Views of temporal Power and Grandeur, during their Attendance upon him; and at laſt, Their ſhameful Denial and Deſertion of him. If we conſider the *Facts* contained in the Goſpel-Hiſtory, and the Tendency of them, they are ſuch as overthrow the Religion both of Jews and Gentiles, and therefore could not eſcape the ſevereſt Scrutiny; and if we conſider the *Numbers* who afterwards undertook to atteſt and publiſh thoſe Facts, it is incredible that if they were not true, no one of them ſhould be prevailed with, either by Hope or Fear, to diſcover the Impoſture; and next to impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that all of them ſhould ſubmit to the ſevereſt Trials, and many of them to Death itſelf, rather than deny them.

Theſe are the Evidences, that the Evangeliſts could not be deceived themſelves, and that they had no Intention or Deſire to deceive others. And we accordingly find all the four Goſpels under the Names of the ſeveral Evangeliſts diſtinctly ſpoken of by the moſt early

early Writers of the Church, as the known and undoubted Records of our Saviour's Life and Actions, and as ſuch, received by all Chriſtian Churches, and read in their publick Aſſemblies. *Clement*, the Diſciple of St. *Paul*, cites many Paſſages out of them; and, in one Place, after having quoted the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, he adds, *and another* Scripture *ſaith*, and then quotes the Goſpel of St. *Matthew*: In another Place, he cites the Goſpel of St. *Luke*, with theſe Words immediately prefixed, *The Lord ſaith in the* Goſpel. *Polycarp* a Diſciple of St. *John*, mentions theſe four Goſpels diſtinctly and by Name, with particular Circumſtances relating to each. *Juſtin Martyr*, ſpeaking of the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, ſays, 'The Apoſtles in their *Records*, which are called Goſpels, declared that it was commanded by Chriſt to be ſo performed; and a little after adds, 'That thoſe Records were publickly read in the Chriſtian Aſſemblies on the Lord's Day; and, in his other Works, he uſes the ſame Stile of the *Records of the Apoſtles*, and cites ſeveral Paſſages out of them, as the ſtanding Records of the Church. * *Tatian*, the Diſciple of *Juſtin*, reduced the *four* Goſpels into *one*, which in After-ages was uſually called the *Harmony of the four Goſpels*. † *Irenæus* gives this Account of all the four, which hath already been taken Notice of in part*, "*Matthew*, "ſays he, delivered his Goſpel to the *Hebrews*, "while *Peter* and *Paul* preach'd at *Rome*; "after whoſe Departure, *Mark* the Diſciple "and Interpreter of *Peter*, conveyed to us in "Writing the Things which *Peter* had preach-"ed; and *Luke*, the Companion of *Paul*, re-"corded in a Book the Goſpel which *Paul* "preach'd.

Clem. Ep. ad Cor. Ep. 2. S. 2, 8.

Grabe, Not. in Iren. p. 205.

Juſtin. Apol. 2.

Juſtin. Dial. Tryph. p. 327, 328, 329, 331, 332, 333, 334.

* Euſeb. l. 4. c. 29. Monoteſſaron.

† Iren. l. 3. c. 1.

* Pag. 12.

" preach'd. Afterwards, *John* the Diſciple of " our Lord, who alſo lean'd on his Breaſt at " Supper, publiſhed his Goſpel while he ſtayed at " *Epheſus* in *Aſia*." The ſame *Irenæus*, ſpeaking of the Authority of the Goſpels, ſays, Iren. l. 3. c. 11. ' That the very Hereticks gave their Teſtimony to them, while each laboured to ſupport his Opinion from them ; ' and as to the Number, ' That they were neither more nor leſs than four, and that they who made them either more or fewer, were vain, ignorant and preſumptuous.' *Clement*, ſpeaking of a Paſſage cited out of the *Ægyptian* Goſpel, ſays, It is not to be found in the four Goſpels which have been delivered down to us.' And *Origen*, mentioning the Writers of the four Goſpels by Name, and in their Order, ſays, ' That thoſe alone (and no other Goſpels) had been univerſally received in the Church.' Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 3. Orig. Com. in Matth. p. 203.

The faithful *Tranſmiſſion* of the Goſpels to future Ages, is a Point that will fall properly under the fifth general Head ; and therefore I will ſhut up this firſt Head, after I have ſhown in a few Words, that ſeveral of the Facts related in the Goſpels, receive Confirmation from the Teſtimony of other Hiſtorians, both *Jewiſh* and *Pagan*, who lived at or near the Time. I have obſerved before, that it has never been denied by the Writers of either Sort, that there was ſuch a Perſon as *Jeſus*, who liv'd in *Judæa*, and ſuffer'd Death upon the Croſs, at the Time mentioned in the Goſpels. The Name which the *Jews* have given him with Reference to his *Crucifixion* (however reproachfully intended) is an Acknowledgment of the Truth of the Fact ; for which, and for other Particulars relating to him, the Chriſtians The Perſon hanged.

appealed

appealed to the Accounts tranſmitted to *Rome*; according to the known Uſage of the Governors making Returns thither, of the Tranſactions in their reſpective Provinces. All theſe Things concerning Chriſt, ſays *Tertullian*, were reported by *Pilate to Tiberius Cæſar*. The ſame is atteſted by *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Hiſtorian of undoubted Credit; who ſpeaking of the Chriſtians, ſays, 'They take the Name from *Chriſt*, who was put to Death in the time of the Emperor *Tiberius*, by *Pontius Pilate*.' Nor did *Julian* himſelf, the bittereſt Enemy that Chriſtianity ever had, deny that there was ſuch a Perſon, or affirm that there was no Foundation for the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory: On the contrary, he owns the Goſpels to have been written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear, and only blames them for magnifying the Works of their Maſter beyond Meaſure; the Truth and Reality of which Works, *Celſus* alſo does in Effect acknowledge, when he aſcribes them to Art Magick. Defences, which neither of theſe would have had Recourſe to, if they could have proved that the Books themſelves were ſpurious; nor would they have omitted to take the Advantage even of a *Suſpicion* of their being ſpurious, but that they knew there was no Foundation for it.

Tertull. Apol.

Acta Pilati.

Tacit. Annal. l. 15. c. 44.

Cyril, l. 6. & 10.

First Paſt. Lett. p. 29.

There are many other Facts which the Evangeliſts relate, that are alſo atteſted both by Heathen and Jewiſh Writers. The Goſpels frequently mention the Warnings which Chriſt gave his Diſciples and Followers, that they muſt reckon upon a State of great Trials and Sufferings for the Sake of his Religion; and *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, and *Pliny* are Witneſſes, how very terrible thoſe Perſecutions were. The Evangeliſts

Tacit. *Nero.* Sueton. *Nero.* Plin. Ep. lib. 10.

geliſts mention the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as foretold by our Saviour; and the Account given of that Deſtruction by *Joſephus* the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, which exactly correſponds with what they relate from the Mouth of Chriſt, is a Teſtimony to the Truth of that Relation. As the ſame *Joſephus* has alſo confirmed the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory in general, by the Accounts he gives of the *Roman* Governors, and the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy at that Time; being agreeable, both as to Perſons and Things, with the Accounts which the Evangeliſts give us of them.

First Paſt. Lett. p. 36.

Pilate, Felix, Feſtus, &c. Sanhedrim, &c.

II. *The whole* Scheme of Chriſtianity, *or the* Goſpel-*Diſpenſation*, *was not fully open'd to the World by Chriſt himſelf immediately*, *in the Courſe of his Miniſtry*; *but many things were left by him to be deliver'd or explain'd by his Apoſtles*, *whom he particularly* inſtructed, *and* commiſſion'd, *for that end.* The Office of *John* the Baptiſt, was only to give notice that the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, *i. e.* of the Meſſiah, was *at hand*, and to ſummon Men to Repentance as a neceſſary Qualification to be admitted Members of that Kingdom, and *to eſcape the Wrath to come. Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* The like Commiſſion was given by Chriſt to the Twelve Apoſtles, when he firſt ſent them forth; *As ye go, preach, ſaying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; and to the Seventy Diſciples, when he ſent them two and two before his Face into every City and Place whither he himſelf would come; *Say unto them, the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* In like manner, Jeſus himſelf *went about all the Cities and Villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of*

Matt. iii. 2.

Matt. x. 7.

Luk. x. 9.

Matt. ix. 35.

the

the Kingdom, or the good News of the coming of the Meſſiah. But he was ſo far from openly proclaiming or owning himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, that he induſtriouſly concealed it, leſt the *Jews*, who expected a temporal Deliverer from the *Roman* Yoke, ſhould break out into Rebellion, and make him obnoxious to the *Roman* Power before the Completion of his Miniſtry. When *Peter*, in the Name of the Diſciples, had declared to him their full Conviction *That he was* Chriſt *the Son of the Living God*; the Charge he immediately gave them, was, *That they ſhould* tell *no Man*, *that he was Jeſus the* Chriſt. When the unclean Spirits fell down before him, and cry'd, ſaying, *Thou art the* Son of God, (a known Appellation of the *Meſſiah* among the *Jews*) it immediately follows, That *Jeſus ſtrictly charged them, that they ſhould not make him* known. After his Transfiguration upon the Mount, and a Voice from Heaven declaring him to be *the Son of God*; Jeſus charges the three Diſciples who were with him, That *they ſhould* tell *the Viſion to no Man, untill the Son of Man was riſen again from the Dead.* Nor did he ever make a *publick* Profeſſion and Acknowledgment that he was the Meſſiah, till he was arraign'd, firſt before the Council of the *Jews*, and then before *Pontius Pilate*, *i. e.* after he had finiſh'd his Miniſtry upon Earth, and there was no Danger, either that the People would raiſe a *Sedition* upon his Account, or that he ſhould be arraign'd and put to Death before the appointed Time. But with regard to *the People*, the great Aim and Deſign of his Miniſtry was, firſt to convince them by his Miracles that he was a *Prophet* ſent from God; which being join'd to

Matt. xvi. 16, 20.

Mark iii. 11, 12.

Luk. iv. 41.

Matt. xvii. 9.

Mark xiv. 62.

Luk. xxii. 70.

Joh. xviii. 37.

the general Expectation of the Meſſiah at that Time, might lead them to *ſuppoſe* that he was the Perſon; and then, to *prepare* them for the Reception of the Goſpel, by taking off the carnal and corrupt Gloſſes which the Scribes and Phariſees had put upon the Moral Law, and by laying open the Pride, Covetouſneſs and Hypocriſy of thoſe Teachers: And this, in order to convince the People, how unfit they were to be Guides in Religion; and by that Means to ſet them at Liberty from the Influence and Authority of Perſons, whoſe Intereſt it was, and whoſe Endeavour it would be, to give all the Oppoſition they could to the Goſpel, that they might preſerve and maintain their own Power. But what he ſaid to the *People* concerning the Kingdom of Heaven or the Goſpel-State, and the Nature and future Progreſs of it, was for the moſt part delivered in Parables; which he explain'd to his Diſciples when they were alone, to let them by Degrees into ſome Underſtanding of the Nature and Deſign of that Spiritual Kingdom which he intended to eſtabliſh; reſerving the *complete* and *perfect* Diſcovery thereof, till he had finiſh'd the great Work of our Redemption by his Reſurrection from the Dead, and had fully prepared them for the Publication of the Goſpel, by ſending the Holy Ghoſt to inſtruct and ſtrengthen them. For we find in the Courſe of our Saviour's Miniſtry, that notwithſtanding the Lights he occaſionally gave them, their Knowledge of theſe things was very imperfect. He often complains of the *Slowneſs* of their Underſtanding, in that they did not apprehend the Deſign of his Parables, nor arrive at a firm and ſtedfaſt Faith in him, by the frequent Oppor-

Matt. xiii. 34. Mark iv. 11. Mark iv. 34.

Matt. xv. 16. Mark vii. 18.

Opportunities they had of hearing his Doctrine and ſeeing his Miracles. When he firſt *began to ſhew them, that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem and ſuffer many things of the Elders and Chief Prieſts and Scribes, and be kill'd, and be raiſed again the third day*; *Peter*, who before had made ſo full a Confeſſion of his Belief that he was the Meſſiah, began to *rebuke* him for theſe Sayings, *Be it far from thee, Lord, This ſhall not be unto thee.* Upon which our Lord told him, *That he ſavour'd not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of Men.* And on a like Occaſion S. *Luke* ſays, *That they underſtood none of theſe things, and this Saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.* When the Samaritans would not receive him in his Way to *Jeruſalem*, two other of his Diſciples *James* and *John*, who, together with *Peter*, were moſt converſant with him, deſired Leave *to command Fire to come down from Heaven, and conſume them, as Elias had done* in a like Caſe; and they received this Rebuke from him, *Ye* know *not what* manner of *Spirit ye are of* (*i. e.* how different the Spirit of the Goſpel is from that of the Law) *for the Son of Man is not come to deſtroy Men's Lives, but to ſave them.* In the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, they evidently reckon'd upon his ſetting up a *temporal* Kingdom, and had Strifes among themſelves which of them ſhould *then* be the greateſt; and even *after* his Reſurrection, the Queſtion they ask him upon that Head, is, *Whether he will at this time reſtore the Kingdom to Iſrael.* All which, together with the Acts of *forſaking* and *denying* him, the Difficulty they ſhew'd in believing his Reſurrection, and that Slowneſs of Heart

Matt. xvi. 8, 11. Mark viii. 14, 17, 21. Matt. xvi. 21, 22, 23. Luk. xviii. 34. Luk. ix. 54. Matt. xvi. 1. Matt. xx. 20, 24. Luk. xxii. 24. Acts i. 6.

Heart with which he upbraided them for not
Luk. xxiv. 25. *applying* the Prophecies concerning him even *after* he had ſuffer'd and was riſen from the Dead; are undeniable Teſtimonies, how imperfect Notions they had as yet of the Nature and Oeconomy of the Goſpel State, and how great Need there was of thoſe *further* Inſtructions which he gave them during the *forty*
Acts i. 3. Days, in which he was *ſeen of them after his Reſurrection, and ſpake of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*; and this, evidently, in order to qualify them for the due Diſcharge of the Commiſſion they received from him im-
Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. mediately before his Aſcenſion into Heaven, *Go ye, and teach all Nations. —Go into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature, teaching them to obſerve* all things *whatſoever I have* commanded *you.*

III. *The* Apoſtles, *in virtue of their Commiſſion from Chriſt, being not only to teſtify and deliver to the World the things which they had ſeen and had been taught by Him, but further to* open *and* explain *the Goſpel Diſpenſation*; *were under the* Guidance and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, *which they received according to his* Promiſe, *before they enter'd upon their Miniſtry.*

The frequent Aſſurances they had from our Saviour that they ſhould receive the Holy Ghoſt, are diſtinctly recorded in the four Evangeliſts; the Truth and Authority of whoſe Writings is fully ſhewn under the firſt Head. But becauſe the Proof of their having this, and ſeveral other Promiſes of our Saviour, punctually fulfill'd to them, do all depend upon Teſtimonies fetch'd from the *Acts of the Apoſtles*; it will be proper in this Place to eſtabliſh the Credit

Credit of that Hiſtory, in the ſame manner that the Credit of the four Evangeliſts has been already eſtabliſh'd. And that the Writer of it was *Luke* the Evangeliſt, appears evidently by comparing the Introduction to his Goſpel with that of the Acts. The Goſpel begins thus: *Foraſmuch as many have taken in hand to ſet forth in Order a Declaration of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the Beginning were Eye-Witneſſes and Miniſters of the Word: It ſeem'd good to me alſo, having had perfect Underſtanding of all things from the very firſt, to write unto thee in order, moſt excellent Theophilus.* With expreſs Reference to this, the Acts of the Apoſtles begin thus: *The former Treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach, until the Day in which he was taken-up*, &c. After this, by a *viſible* Connection of the Hiſtory, he proceeds to relate what the Apoſtles did, immediately after our Saviour's Aſcenſion; ſo that no doubt has ever been made, but that the ſame Perſon was the Writer of both. That he was well qualified to write his Goſpel, has been already ſhewn under the firſt Head; and the Evidences there laid down, conclude yet more ſtrongly for the Authority of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*; of many of which Acts, we are ſure, he himſelf was an Eye and Ear-Witneſs. Citations out of this Book are found in *Clement* the Companion of St. *Paul*, and in *Polycarp*, the Diſciple of St. *John*. *Irenæus*, in the ſecond Century, writing againſt the heretical Doctrine of two Principles (one Good, the other Evil) argues throughout one whole Chapter, from Paſſages taken at large out of the Book of

Luk. i. 1.

Acts i. 1.

Acts xvi, &c.

Clem. Ep. ad Corinth. S. 18.

Polycarp ad Philip. S. 1.

Iren. l. 3. c. 12.

of *Acts*, to ſhew the Contrariety of that Hereſy to the Doctrine of the Apoſtles. *Euſebius* gives an Account of the ſame Book as follows: "Luke, *a native of Antioch, and a Phyſician by Profeſſion, who had lived long and intimately with Paul, and was much converſant with the other Apoſtles, left two Books, written by* Divine Inſpiration; *one of them*, his Goſpel —*the other entitled*, The Acts of the Apoſtles; *which he did not write from the Relations of others, but as Facts that he ſaw with his own Eyes.*" And elſewhere, among the Books which were *univerſally* received, he reckons the *Acts of the Apoſtles* next to the four Evangeliſts.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 4.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 25.

Having eſtabliſh'd the Credit and Authority of thoſe Writings which teſtify the Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, and the Miſſion thereof according to that Promiſe; I will now proceed to ſhow from the Evangeliſts, upon what Occaſions and for what Ends the Promiſe was made. Our Saviour tells his Diſciples, a little before his Death, *I have yet* many things *to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*; and then he immediately adds, *Howbeit, when he the* Spirit of Truth *is come, he will guide you into all* Truth: Agreeably to what he had told them a little before; *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, being yet preſent with you: But the* Comforter, *which is the* Holy Ghoſt, *whom the Father will ſend in my Name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your* Remembrance, *whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.* Again, *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another* Comforter, *that he may abide with you for ever, even the* Spirit of Truth: And, *When the* Comforter *is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the* Spirit of Truth, *which proceedeth*

Joh. xvi. 12, 13.

Joh. xiv. 26, 27.

Joh. xiv. 16, 17.

Joh. xv. 26.

proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify *of me.* When he tells them, they muſt be brought into the Synagogues, and unto Magiſtrates and Powers, he *bids them take no Thought how or what thing they ſhall anſwer, or what they ſhall ſay*; and then adds, *For the* Holy Ghoſt *ſhall teach you in the ſame Hour what ye ought to ſay:* And, *I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom, which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor reſiſt.* When he ſees them in Trouble, and finds that Sorrow had fill'd their Hearts at the Thoughts of his leaving them, he comforts them thus: *I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.* When he had given them their Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel unto all Nations, he immediately adds, *And behold I ſend the Promiſe of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the City of Jeruſalem, until ye be endued with Power from on High:* And, *Ye ſhall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you; and ye ſhall be Witneſſes unto Me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt Part of the Earth.* This Promiſe was fulfill'd on the Day of Pentecoſt, when they were all with one Accord in one Place, and *ſuddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty Wind, and fill'd all the Houſe where they were ſitting: And there appear'd unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it ſat upon each of them: And they were all fill'd with the* Holy Ghoſt, *and began to ſpeak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* And there being at that time

Luk. xii. 11, 12.

Luk. xxi. 15.

Joh. xvi. 6, 7.

Luk. xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4.

Acts i. 8.

Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7.

devout Men out of every Nation who were come to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, every one heard them ſpeak in his own Language wherein he was born. And while the People ſtand amaz'd
Acts ii. 33. at this, St. *Peter* tells them, That *Jeſus whom they had crucified, being raiſed from the Dead, and by the right Hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father* the Promiſe *of the* Holy Ghoſt, *had ſhed forth that which they now ſaw and heard.*

It appears by theſe Accounts, that the *full* and *final* Opening of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, was to be the Work of the *Holy Ghoſt*, directing the Apoſtles, and ſtrengthening them in their Miniſtry, and enabling them by his Gifts to convey the Knowledge of it to all Nations, and to confirm it with undoubted Teſtimonies of a divine Commiſſion and Authority. Whatever they had *heard* from Chriſt, or *ſeen* him do, the Holy Ghoſt brought freſh again to their Remembrance; the Truths which they could not bear in their more imperfect State, the Holy Ghoſt inſtructed them in, and made them fully apprehend; and *by leading them into all Truth*, he effectually ſecured them againſt *all Error*. They were to preach the Goſpel to *all Nations*, and he taught them the Languages of *all*. In the Courſe of their Miniſtry, they were to meet with great Trouble, Difficulty, and Perſecution; and he inſpired and ſupported them with ſuitable Supplies of Wiſdom, Courage and Comfort. Thus encouraged, ſtrengthened, and aſſiſted, by the Holy Ghoſt, the Apoſtles *went forth and preach'd every where*; *the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with Signs following*; or, as it is elſewhere expreſs'd, *God bearing them Witneſs, both*
Mark xvi. 20.
Heb. ii. 4.

with

with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. This is affirm'd on many Occaſions; firſt, of *all* the Apoſtles in general, while they continued together at *Jeruſalem*. That *many* Wonders *and* Signs *were done by their Hands.* ——That *with great Power they gave Witneſs to the Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus.* ——That *by the Hands of the Apoſtles were many* Signs *and* Wonders *wrought among the People:* That *there came a Multitude out of the Cities round about Jeruſalem, bringing Sick Folks, and them which were vexed with unclean Spirits, and they were* healed *every one:* And then, as wrought by particular Apoſtles; by *Peter*, in the extraordinary Act of Power exerciſed upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira* for *lying to the Holy Ghoſt*; by *Peter* and *John*, who upon the Occaſion of curing a Man that was laine from his Mother's Womb, declared by what *Power* they and the other Apoſtles effected their miraculous Cures; *In the* Name *of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth riſe up and walk*; And, *Be it known unto you, and to all the People of Iſrael, that by the Name of* Jeſus Chriſt *of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the Dead, by him doth this Man ſtand here before you whole:* And St. *Peter* (upon his curing *Æneas* of the Palſy) *Æneas, Jeſus Chriſt* maketh *thee whole.*

Acts ii. 43. Acts iv. 33. Acts v. 12. Acts v. 16. Acts v. 5, 10. Acts iii. 6. Acts viii. 6, 7, 13. —ix 32, 35, 39, 40. Acts iv. 10. Acts ix. 34.

Nor had the Apoſtles only the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Tongues and Miracles, beſtowed upon *them*, but theſe Powers were alſo by their Miniſtry conferred upon *others*. Our Saviour intimated, that *Believers* ſhould receive Gifts of an extraordinary Nature; for St. *John* repeating what he had ſaid concerning *Rivers of Water that ſhould flow out* of him, adds,

Joh vii. 39

adds, *This ſpake he of the* Spirit *which they that* believe *on him ſhould receive*; *for the* Holy Ghoſt *was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified*: and ſo our Saviour himſelf, *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, he that* believeth *on me, the Works that I do ſhall he do alſo, and greater Works than theſe; becauſe I go unto my Father.* And it is certain in Fact, that by Prayer, and laying on of Hands, the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were beſtowed by the Apoſtles upon many of the Believers. After *Peter* and *John* had related to the Brethren at *Jeruſalem*, the Threatnings of the High Prieſts and Council of the *Jews*, it follows, *And now, Lord, behold their Threatnings, and grant unto thy Servants, that with all Boldneſs they may ſpeak thy Word, by ſtretching forth thy Hand* to heal, *and that* Signs *and* Wonders *may be done by the Name of thy holy Child Jeſus. And when they had prayed, the Place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled, and they were all* filled *with the* Holy Ghoſt. Again, when the Apoſtles which were at *Jeruſalem*, heard that *Samaria* had received the Word of God (by the preaching of *Philip* the Evangeliſt) *they ſent unto them* Peter *and* John, *who when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the* Holy Ghoſt; *then laid they their Hands on them, and they received the* Holy Ghoſt. While *Peter* was ſpeaking to *Cornelius* and his Company, *the* Holy Ghoſt *fell on all them which heard the Word, and they heard them ſpeak with Tongues and magnify God.* To theſe we may add the Inſtances of *Stephen* and *Philip*, two of the ſeven Deacons; of the firſt of whom it is ſaid, that *he did great* Wonders *and* Miracles

Joh. xiv. 12.

Acts iv. 29, 30, 31.

Acts viii. 14, 15, 17.

Acts x. 44, 46.

Acts vi. 8.

among

among the People; and of the ſecond, that *Simon Magus himſelf* wondered when he heard *unclean Spirits crying with loud Voices*, and ſaw thoſe who were poſſeſſed with them cured, and *many taken with Palſies and that were lame, healed.* Acts viii. 7, 13.

There is one Thing further obſervable, concerning the Miracles wrought by the Apoſtles and others, in Teſtimony of their divine Miſſion; and that is, The numerous Converſions to the Chriſtian Faith which were made by them. Upon hearing the Apoſtles ſpeak all Sorts of Tongues on the Day of Pentecoſt, *there were added to them above three Thouſand Souls*: Acts ii. 41; Acts iv. 4. Upon the Cure of the lame Man by *Peter* and *John*, and the Occaſion they took from thence to recommend and enforce the Doctrine of the Goſpel, *many of them which heard the Word* believed, *and the Number of the Men was about* five Thouſand: Acts v. 12, 14. Upon the many Signs and Wonders which were wrought by the Apoſtles among the People, *Believers were the more added to the Lord, Multitudes both of Men and Women*: Upon *Philip*'s preaching the Goſpel at *Samaria*, *the People with one Accord gave heed unto thoſe Things which he ſpake*; *hearing and ſeeing the* Miracles *which he did*; Acts viii. 6. and even *Simon*, he who had bewitched them with his Sorceries, and to whom they had all given heed from the higheſt to the loweſt as the great Power of God, was baptized, and continued with *Philip*, *and wondered*, *beholding the* Miracles *and* Signs *which were done*. Acts viii. 9, 10, 13.

Thus far, of the Apoſtles and Diſciples of our Lord; of the Commiſſion they had from him to preach the Goſpel, and their Qualifications for

for the effectual Diſcharge of that Commiſſion, by the Inſtructions they received from his own Mouth, by the further Lights which the Holy Ghoſt gave them, and by the Gift of Tongues and the Power of Miracles, to enable them to *propagate* and *eſtabliſh* the Truths they preach'd.

But as St. *Paul* alſo was a glorious Inſtrument in carrying on that great Work, and both his *Commiſſion* and *Inſtructions* were conveyed in a Method different from the reſt, it will be neceſſary to give a particular Account of both, in order to lay a ſure Foundation for the Authority of the ſeveral Epiſtles written by him. The Account of his miraculous Converſion is delivered by St. *Luke* in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and by himſelf in the ſame Book, in his two Defences before *Lyſias* and *Feſtus*, firſt at *Jeruſalem*, and then at *Cæſarea*. And his *immediate Miſſion* from Chriſt is thus expreſſed, *I have appeared unto thee for this Purpoſe, to make thee a* Miniſter *and a* Witneſs *both of theſe Things which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe Things in the which I* will appear *unto thee; delivering thee from the People, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now ſend thee, To open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.* And ſo *Ananias*, to whom he was directed by the heavenly Viſion, relates what Chriſt had revealed to him concerning *Paul*; *He is a choſen Veſſel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of* Iſrael: And, *The Lord, even Jeſus that appeared unto thee in the Way as thou cameſt, hath ſent me, that thou mighteſt receive thy Sight, and be filled with the* Holy Ghoſt. And again, *The God of our Fathers hath*

Acts ix. 3. —xxii. 3. —xxvi. 12.

Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18.

Acts xxii. 21.

Acts ix. 15.

Acts ix. 17.

Acts xxii. 14, 15.

hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his Will, and ſee that Juſt one, and ſhouldeſt hear the Voice of his Mouth: For thou ſhalt be his Witneſs *unto all Men, of what thou haſt ſeen and heard.* And whereas the other Apoſtles ſtyle themſelves, in the Beginning of their Epiſtles, the *Servants* and the *Apoſtles* of Chriſt, St. *Paul*'s Style concerning himſelf is, *Called to be an Apoſtle,* — Rom. i. 1.
Separated unto the Goſpel of God — *An Apoſtle* 1 Cor. i. 1.
of Jeſus Chriſt by the Will of God; and,* *An* 2 Cor. i. 1.
Apoſtle not of Man, neither by Man, but by Epheſ. i. 1.
Jeſus Chriſt and God the Father. And as to Coloſ. i 1.
his Doctrine, he tells the *Corinthians* on Occa- 2 Tim. i. 1.
ſion of his ſpeaking of the Inſtitution of the * Gal. i. 1.
laſt Supper, *I have received of the* Lord *that* 1 Cor. xi.
which I alſo delivered unto you; and ſpeaking 23.
of the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, *I de-* 1 Cor. xv.
livered unto you that which I alſo received; 3.
and of his Doctrine in General, *The Goſpel* Gal. i. 11,
which was preached of me, was not of Man; 12.
for I neither received it of Man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.

To this Account of his Miſſion and Doctrine, we muſt add, that both were juſtified and confirmed by many and great Miracles. It is ſaid of *Paul* and *Barnabas* when at *Iconium*, *Long time therefore abode they, ſpeaking boldly in* Acts xiv. 3.
the Lord, which gave Teſtimony *to the Word of his Grace, and granted* Signs *and* Wonders *to be done by their Hands*; and at *Epheſus*, *God wrought ſpecial* Miracles *by the Hands of Paul*; Acts xix.
ſo that from his Body were brought unto the 11, 12.
Sick, Handkerchiefs or Aprons, and the Diſeaſes departed from them and the evil Spirits went out of them. In *Cyprus*, an Act of *Extraordinary Power* was exerciſed on *Elymas* the Sorcerer,

Sorcerer, whom *Paul*, moved by the Holy Ghoſt, ſtruck with *Blindneſs* for endeavouring *to turn away the Deputy from the Faith.* At *Lyſtra, he commanded the lame Man to ſtand upright on his Feet, and he leaped and walked.* At *Philippi*, where was a Damſel poſſeſſed with a Spirit of Divination, *Paul* ſaid to the Spirit, *I command thee in the* Name of Jeſus Chriſt *to come out of her, and he came out the ſame Hour.* In *Melita*, the Father of the chief Man of the Iſland lay ſick of a Fever and a Bloody Flux; *To whom Paul enter'd in, and laid his Hands on him and* healed *him:* And, *when this was done, others alſo who had Diſeaſes in the Iſland, came and were healed.* And for the *Succeſs* of his Miniſtry, thus ſupported and enforced by the Teſtimony of Miracles, we may appeal, not only to the particular Converſions mentioned in the Acts of the Apoſtles as the Effects of them, but to the Number of Churches which were founded by him; many of them in ſome of the moſt populous Cities and Countries.

Acts xiii. 10, 11.
Acts xiv. 8.
Acts xvi. 18.
Acts xxviii. 8, 9.
Acts xiii. 12 —xiv. 14. —xvi. 33.

One thing more I muſt obſerve, That as the reſt of the Apoſtles had the Power of conferring the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt upon others, ſo *Paul* had the ſame Power: For it is ſaid of the Converts to Chriſtianity whom he found at *Epheſus, That when he had laid his Hands upon them, the* Holy Ghoſt *came on them, and they ſpake with* Tongues, *and propheſied.*

Acts xix. 6.

IV. *What the things are relating to the Goſpel Diſpenſation, which the Apoſtles were to open and explain, purſuant to the Commiſſion and Inſtruction received from Chriſt, and under the Guidance and Aſſiſtance of the* Holy Ghoſt; *muſt, in Conjunction with the Goſpels, be learnt from*

from their Preaching *and* Writings, *as delivered to us in their* Acts *and* Epiſtles. Some of the Doctrines, which they were charged by Chriſt to deliver to the World, are recorded in the four Goſpels, as being Part of the Inſtructions they received from himſelf; but as it is very certain that *all* the Inſtructions which he delivered to his Diſciples are not recorded in the Goſpels, ſo is it no leſs certain, that *many* of the Things which he did deliver to them during the Courſe of his Miniſtry, were delivered in an obſcure Manner, and not underſtood by them at the Time; particularly, thoſe relating to the Nature of his Kingdom, his Death, and his Reſurrection. His ordinary Way of teaching the People, was by Parables. *All theſe Things ſpake Jeſus to the Multitude in* Parables, *and without a* Parable *ſpake he not unto them*; — *With many ſuch* Parables *ſpake he the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it; but without a* Parable *ſpake he not unto them.* 'Tis added indeed, that *when they were alone, he expounded all Things to his Diſciples*; but they ſo little underſtood them, that, as I obſerved before, he often upbraids them with their Slowneſs of Apprehenſion and Want of Faith; and, of thoſe Expoſitions, but few are recorded. A little before his Death, he tells them, *I have yet* many Things *to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them* now; and then he immediately adds, *Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you unto all Truth*; where he evidently leaves the *many Things* he had to ſay, which they could not then bear, to be revealed to them by the Holy Ghoſt, who was alſo to bring to their Remembrance all

Matt. xiii. 34.

Mark iv. 33, 34.

Pag. 20.

John xvi. 12, 13.

that he himſelf had delivered to them. After his Reſurrection, he was ſeen of the Apoſtles *forty Days, ſpeaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*; but what the Things were that he delivered to them in thoſe forty Days, is no where recorded. Nor indeed could the great Work of the Redemption of Mankind, which mainly depended upon his *dying* and *riſing again*, be ſet forth and explained, till *after* his Reſurrection; when, upon Occaſion of their Doubts concerning the Reality of it, he ſhowed them out of *Moſes* and the Prophets and the *Pſalms*, that he was to ſuffer and riſe again, and *opened their Underſtandings that they might underſtand the Scriptures*. I will only add as to St. *Paul*, that the ſame Doctrines which were conveyed to the other Apoſtles, firſt by the Teaching of Chriſt, and then by the Light and Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, were fully made known to him by immediate Revelation.

Acts i. 3.

Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45.

See before, p. 30.

The Apoſtles being thus inſtructed in the whole Will of Chriſt, were properly his *Meſſengers*, to convey and deliver it to the World (*As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you — Go ye unto all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature,——Teaching them to obſerve all Things whatſoever I have commanded you.*) And from whom are we to learn the Will of Chriſt, but from his own *Meſſengers*, whom he fully inſtructed in it, and intruſted with the delivering it to the World? They were the *Ambaſſadors* of Chriſt *to pray us in his Stead to be reconciled to God*; and from whom therefore, but from them, are we to learn the *Terms* of that Reconciliation, and the *Grounds* of that great Favour and Mercy extended by God

John xx. 21. Mark xvi. 15. Mat. xxviii. 20.

2 Cor. v. 20.

God to Mankind? They were in a particular Manner appointed to be Witneſſes of his *Reſurrection*; and from what other Hands, but theſe that were intruſted with publiſhing the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, can we learn the Importance of it, and the Benefits accruing to Mankind by it? Thoſe Ambaſſadors and Meſſengers were endowed with the Power of working *Miracles*; and for what End ſhould this be, but to prove the Divinity of their Commiſſion, and to recommend their Doctrines to our Attention and Belief? In general, the Apoſtles were appointed by Chriſt to be *the Light of the World*; and how was that Light to be conveyed to future Generations, otherwiſe than by their Preachings and Writings?

Acts i. 22. —v. 32. —x. 41.

Matt. v. 14.

Suppoſing then that the Writings of the Apoſtles, and the Accounts we have of their Preaching, are true and genuine, *i. e.* that they were really written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear; no Doubt can remain, but that the Things relating to the Goſpel Diſpenſation (which were to be opened and explained by them, purſuant to the Inſtructions received from Chriſt, and under the Direction of the Holy Ghoſt) are to be learnt from their Acts and Epiſtles, in Conjunction with the four Goſpels. The Authority of the *Goſpels* and the *Acts of the Apoſtles* I have already eſtabliſhed, and ſhall now proceed to ſhow, that the EPISTLES alſo were the genuine Writings of the Apoſtles.

Euſebius reckoning up the Books of the New Teſtament which were *univerſally* received, after Mention made of the four Goſpels and the Acts of the Apoſtles, adds, '*Next to theſe we are to reckon the Epiſtles of Paul*;' every one

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 25.

of which (except that to the *Hebrews*) expreſly bears his Name; and they are frequently cited and referred to by the moſt early Writers of the Church, as has been abundantly ſhewn by many learned Men, and may eaſily be ſeen by looking into the Writings of *Clement*, *Ignatius* and *Polycarp* in the firſt Century, and after them into thoſe of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* in the ſecond. The ſame Thing is there affirmed by *Euſebius*, of the firſt Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, and the firſt of St. *John*; namely, that they had been received univerſally. And as to the Doubts that have been raiſed concerning other Epiſtles; it muſt be premiſed in general, that no Advantage can accrue from thence to the Adverſaries of the Chriſtian Religion, till they point out the particular Doctrines relating to Faith or Manners, which are contained in thoſe, that are not alſo contained either expreſly, or by fair and clear Deduction, in the other Books of the New Teſtament, which the Church of Chriſt has univerſally received. Much leſs can they reap any Advantage from thoſe Doubts, if it ſhall be made appear that in every Inſtance they are ill founded.

As to the Epiſtle to the HEBREWS; the main Doubt concerning it has ariſen from its not being expreſly under the Name of St. *Paul*, as all his other Epiſtles are; but this receives a very plain and natural Solution. St. *Paul* was properly the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, as appears from many Paſſages both in the Book of *Acts*, and in his own Epiſtles. The Direction he received from Chriſt was this, *Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem, for they will not receive thy Teſtimony concerning me*; and, *Depart, for I will ſend thee far hence to the* Gentiles.

Acts xxii. 18, 21.

Gentiles. In his Epiſtles he ſpeaks of himſelf as the *Apoſtle of the* Gentiles, as the *Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the* Gentiles, and *as the Priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt for the* Gentiles; as he, *to whom it pleaſed God to reveal his Son, that he might preach him among the* Heathen; he, *to whom this Grace or* Commiſſion *was given, that he ſhould preach among the* Gentiles; he, *who was appointed a Teacher of the* Gentiles; he, *whom the Lord ſtrengthened, that by him the Preaching might be fully known, and that all the* Gentiles *might hear.* All which are briefly comprehended in the Declaration he made to the *Galatians*; *The Goſpel of the* Uncircumciſion *was committed unto me, as the Goſpel of the* Circumciſion *was unto Peter; for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the Apoſtleſhip of the Circumciſion, the ſame was mighty in me towards the* Gentiles. 'Tis true, the Apoſtolical Commiſſion was *general*, 'To preach the Goſpel,' and there are many Inſtances of St. *Paul*'s endeavouring to convert thoſe of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and of his going into their Synagogues, and reaſoning with them. This he did at *Salamis*, at *Iconium*, at *Theſſalonica*, at *Berea*, at *Corinth*, and at *Epheſus*. At *Theſſalonica*, particularly, it is ſaid that *Paul*, as his Manner *was*, went *in unto them, and three Sabbath Days reaſoned with them out of the Scriptures*: At Epheſus, he *went into the* Synagogue, *and ſpake boldly for the Space of* three Months, *diſputing and perſuading the Things concerning the Kingdom of God*: And he tells the Elders of that Church, *That he had teſtified both to the* Jews, *and alſo to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And at *Antioch*, where the

Rom. xi. 13. —xv. 16. Gal. i. 16. Epheſ. iii. 8. 2 Tim. i. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 17. Gal. ii. 7. Acts xiii. 5. —xiii. 16. —xiv. 1. —xvii. 1. —xvii. 10. —xviii. 4. —xviii. 19. —xix. 8. —xx. 21. —xviii. 6.

the *Jews* contradicted and blaſphemed, he tells them, *It was* neceſſary *that the Word of God ſhould* firſt *have been ſpoken to* them; *but ſeeing* they *put it from them, and judged themſelves unworthy of everlaſting Life, he turned to the* Gentiles. And to how great a Height the Prejudices of the Jews againſt him had riſen by degrees, we may gather from the furious Aſſault that was made upon him at *Jeruſalem*, and their crying out, *Men of Iſrael, help; this is the Man, that teacheth all Men every where againſt the People and the Law, and this Place*; while his Affection to the whole Jewiſh Nation, and his Concern for them was ſuch, as to make him even *wiſh that himſelf were accurſed from Chriſt, for his* Brethren, *his* Kinſmen *according to the Fleſh.*

Acts xxi. 28.

Rom. ix. 3.

It appears from the foregoing Accounts, how natural it was for St. *Paul* to *write* as well as preach to the Jews; and how natural alſo, in writing to them, to avoid the *Authoritative* Style that he uſed when he wrote to thoſe Churches which had been converted by him, or which were more *peculiarly* within his Commiſſion, and to chuſe to write to them only as his *Brethren* and *Kinſmen*, that is, in his own Language, as he and they were equally *Hebrews*, and *Iſraelites*, and the *Seed of Abraham.*

2 Cor. xi. 12.

But, notwithſtanding the Omiſſion of his Name, and of his Apoſtolical Character, there are many cogent Arguments to ſatisfy us, that St. *Paul* was the Author of this Epiſtle, againſt the contrary Suſpicions of ſome learned Men. The general Scope of it is to prove, that the Rites preſcribed by the Ceremonial Law, were only *Types* and *Figures* of Chriſt, and that He being now come, they were of no further Uſe, but

but were to ceaſe and give Way to a Diſpenſation of a much higher and more excellent Nature. And what was the Accuſation brought againſt St. *Paul* by the Jews? Why, *That he taught all the* Jews *which were among the Gentiles, to forſake* Moſes, *ſaying that they ought not to circumciſe their Children, neither to walk after the Cuſtoms*; and, That *he taught all Men every where againſt the People and the Law, and the Temple.* —— The Writer of this Epiſtle uſes the Style of *our Brother Timothy*; and this is the Style which we find frequently uſed by St. *Paul* in his other Epiſtles. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, and Timothy our Brother*, is the Introduction to three of them; and writing to the *Theſſalonians*, he ſays, *I have ſent Timotheus our Brother*; nor do we find this Style uſed by any other of the Apoſtles. —— The ſame is obſervable of another Expreſſion towards the Concluſion of this *Epiſtle*, *Pray for us*; being what we alſo find in his Epiſtles both to the *Coloſſians* and *Theſſalonians*; with others of the ſame Import in thoſe to the *Romans* and *Epheſians*, where he beſeeches them to *ſtrive together in their Prayers to God* for him, and *to pray always with all Prayer and Supplication* for him; nor is this uſed by any other Apoſtle.—— This Epiſtle, towards the Concluſion, has a ſolemn Prayer to the *God of Peace*, for a Bleſſing upon the Chriſtians to whom he is writing; and we find the like, towards the Concluſion of his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, *The God of Peace be with you all*; and, to the *Corinthians*, *The God of Love and Peace ſhall be with you*; to the *Philippians*, *The God of Peace ſhall be with you*, and to the *Theſſalonians*, *The very God of Peace ſanctify you wholly*

Acts xxi. 21, 28.

Heb. xiii. 23.

2 Cor. i. 1. Coloſſ. i. 1. Philem. i. 1 Theſſ. iii. 2.

Heb. xiii. 18.

Col. iv. 3. 2 Theſſ. iii. 1.

Rom. xv. 30. Epheſ. vi. 18.

Heb. xiii. 20.

Rom. xv. 33. —xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Phil. iv. 9. 1 Theſſ. v. 23.

2 Theſſ. iii. 16. *ly*, and, *The Lord of Peace himſelf give you Peace always*; and the like Expreſſion is not only thus frequent in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, but is not to be met with in any other. — The ſame is to be ſaid of the Term *Mediator*; for tho' the *Thing* be ſpoken of in other Parts of the New Teſtament, the *Term* is not found any where, but in the Writings of St. *Paul*. —In this Epiſtle, he ſpeaks of his Impriſonment, under the Name of *Bonds*; and he mentions the ſame at leaſt ten times in his other Epiſtles, and all of them written from *Italy*, as this to the *Hebrews* was; neither do we find that Expreſſion us'd by any other Apoſtle.—In this Epiſtle, he pleads the Integrity of his Heart and Conſcience, *We truſt we have a good Conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly*; and the ſame Plea is often made by him on other Occaſions: Thus his Declaration before the Council was, *Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good* Conſcience *before God until this Day*; and before Felix, *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a* Conſcience *void of Offence towards God and towards Men*; and in his Epiſtle to the Romans, *I ſay the Truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my* Conſcience *alſo bearing me Witneſs*; to the Corinthians, ſpeaking of himſelf, *Our Rejoycing is this, the Teſtimony of our* Conſcience; and to Timothy, *Whom I ſerve with pure* Conſcience.—This Epiſtle concludes with a *Salutation* to and from the Brethren; which is found at the End of almoſt every Epiſtle of St. *Paul*; and the Chriſtians are here called *Saints*, which is a Style very frequently uſed by that Apoſtle, and almoſt *peculiar* to him.

Heb. viii. 6. —ix. 15. —xii. 24.

Heb. xiii. 18.

Acts xxiii. 1.

Acts xxiv. 16.

Rom. ix. 1.

2 Cor. i. 12.

2 Tim. i. 3.

To

To this Epiſtle St. *Peter* may well be understood to refer as written by St. *Paul*, where he is exhorting the Jewiſh Chriſtians under Perſecution, to wait with Patience for the *Day of the Lord*, and to take care to be found of him *without Spot and blameleſs*, that it might be *Salvation* to them; and this, in anſwer to the Scoffers of thoſe Days, who upbraided them with the *Expectation* of it, as vain and groundleſs, and, by way of Deriſion, ask'd, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming?* And then St. *Peter* adds, *Even as our beloved Brother* Paul *alſo, according to the Wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you*; which moſt probably relates to this Epiſtle, as the *only one* that he wrote to the Jewiſh Chriſtians, and as containing in it ſeveral Exhortations to the ſame Purpoſe with that which St. *Peter* is there giving. For, not to inſiſt upon his Exhortation to the *Hebrews, to be Followers of them who through* Faith *and* Patience *inherited the* Promiſes, enforced by the Example of *Abraham, who after he had* patiently *endured, obtain'd the* Promiſe; nor upon that other Exhortation, *Let us hold faſt the* Profeſſion *of our Faith without wavering, for he is* faithful *that* promiſed; not, I ſay, to reſt upon theſe, it will be hard to find in the whole New Teſtament any Paſſage to which St. *Peter* might ſo probably refer, as this which follows: *Caſt not away your* Confidence, *which hath great* Recompence *of Reward: For ye have need of* Patience, *that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the* Promiſe: *For yet a little while, and he that* ſhall *come* will *come, and will not tarry: Now, the Juſt ſhall live by* Faith; *but if any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no Pleaſure in him: But we are not of them who draw back unto* Perdition,

2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

Heb. vi. 12, 15.

Heb. x. 23.

Heb. x. 34, 35, 36.

but of them that believe to the Saving *of the Soul.*

Rom. ii. 4. As to the Paſſage in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Romans*, which ſpeaks of the *Goodneſs* and *Forbearance* and *Long-ſuffering* of God, as *leading to Repentance*; St. *Peter* cannot be ſuppoſed to refer to it, for two plain Reaſons. In that Paſſage, St. *Paul* Addreſſes himſelf to the *Unbelieving* Jews; whereas St. *Peter* is writing to the *Believing* Jews, and to them only. St. *Paul*'s is a Reproof for abuſing the Goodneſs and Long-ſuffering of God to a Security in ſinning, contrary to the Effect it ought to have upon wicked Men; but St. *Peter*'s is an Exhortation to ſincere Chriſtians to wait with Patience, in an Aſſurance that it will bring Salvation in the End.

Under the preſent Head of *Internal* Teſtimony, Notice muſt be taken of a Paſſage in this Epiſtle, which may ſeem at firſt ſight to imply, that St. *Paul* was not the Writer of it. Speaking of the Salvation of Sinners through

Hebr. ii. 3. the Goſpel, he ſays, *Which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was* confirm'd *unto* Us *by them that* heard *him*; whereas St. *Paul* had the Goſpel reveal'd to him immediately from Heaven. But to this there are two plain Anſwers: One, That St. *Paul*, between his Converſion and the Time when this Epiſtle was written, had ſeen and convers'd with ſeveral of

Gal. i. 18, 19. the Apoſtles. *After three Years*, ſays he, *I went up to Jeruſalem to ſee* Peter, *and abode with him fifteen Days*; and he tells us, that at the ſame time he ſaw *James*, the Brother of our Lord.

Gal. ii. 1, 9, 11. *— Then, fourteen Years after I went up to Jeruſalem, — and communicated to them that Goſpel which I preach'd among the Gentiles*; and there he ſaw *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, and after that he ſaw

Peter

Peter at *Antioch*. So that St. *Paul* might *truly* ſay, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel was *confirm'd* to him by them that heard Chriſt; and he had *Occaſion* to ſay it, leſt it ſhould be objected to him by the Jewiſh Chriſtians, that his Doctrine was different from that of the other Apoſtles; againſt whom it was a proper Defence, that it was no other Doctrine than that which had been confirm'd by their own Apoſtles, who heard Chriſt, and had at firſt preached the Goſpel to them. The other Anſwer is, that it is not uncommon with St. *Paul* to include himſelf in the Number of thoſe to whom he writes, tho' not concern'd equally with them, or not at all: *Let* us *not commit Fornication*. — *Let* us *not tempt Chriſt*. — We *ourſelves* (ſpeaking of the Gentile State) *were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another*. 1 Cor. x. 8, 9. Tit. iii. 3.

Beſides the *Internal* Proofs that St. *Paul* was the Writer of this Epiſtle, there are Proofs *External*, and thoſe both numerous and expreſs. Not to mention in this Place the Citations of the *moſt early* Fathers out of this Epiſtle, as being only Proofs of the Authority, and not of the Author, and made by Writers who rarely mention the *Name* of the Apoſtle whoſe Words they cite: In the ſecond Century, *Clemens Alexandrinus* mentions it under the Name of St. *Paul*, where ſpeaking of the *Greek* Philoſophy, as ſtyl'd by that Apoſtle, *Elements or Introductions to the Truth*, and expreſly mentioning him by Name, he adds, *And therefore writing to the* Hebrews, *he ſaith, Ye have need that one teach you again, which be the Elements* (*or* firſt Principles) *of the Oracles of God*. And elſewhere, having Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 6. § 8. Col. ii. 8. Heb. v. 12.

Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 4. § 20. cited a Paſſage of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to *Titus* concerning the Behaviour of the elder Women in Quietneſs and Sobriety, *that the Word of God be not blaſphemed*, he immediately adds, *But rather, ſays the* ſame *Apoſtle, follow Peace with all Men*, &c. repeating four Verſes of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. So alſo *Origen*, in the third Century, having quoted theſe Words out of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, *I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat*, adds this; The ſame *Perſon* ſaith, *Ye are become ſuch as have need of Milk, and not of ſtrong Meat*, and then he goes on to repeat two other entire Verſes out of this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. And elſewhere, having cited Paſſages out of the other Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, he adds parallel Paſſages out of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, with this or the like Connection, *The ſame Apoſtle ſaith*. In his Homilies upon this Epiſtle he accounts for the Difference between it and St. *Paul*'s other Epiſtles in point of Style, by ſuppoſing that the *Matter* was his, but that it was compos'd and methodiz'd by ſome other Hand. And therefore he *commends thoſe Churches which receiv'd it as St.* Paul's, becauſe, as he adds, *the* Antients *did not aſcribe it to him* raſhly. And that which follows, of ſome of the Antients aſcribing it to St. *Clement*, and ſome to St. *Luke*, evidently refers to the ſuppos'd *Penman*, and not to the *Author*; to the Language only, and not at all to the Matter.

Heb. xii. 13, 14, 15. — xiii. 4. Orig. Celſ. l. 3. p. 143. 1 Cor. iii. 2. Heb. v. 12, 13, 14. Heb. x. 32, 35. Orig. Philocal. p. 10, 17. adv. Celſ. l. 7. p. 351. *and in other Places.* Euſeb. l. 6. c. 25.

In the next Century, the Council of *Laodicea* enumerating the known and received Books of the New Teſtament, place in their Courſe *The fourteen Epiſtles of St.* Paul; to the *Romans one, to the* Corinthians *two*, &c. *and to the* Hebrews *one:* To which I will add the Teſtimonies of

Concil. Laod. Can. 60.

of two Writers, one of the *Greek* and the other of the *Latin* Church, I mean *Euſebius* and *Jerome*; who had made more nice and ſtrict Enquiries than any other about the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, and the Writers of them. *Euſebius*, ſpeaking of the received Books of the New Teſtament, deliver'd his own Judgment, *That the fourteen Epiſtles of St.* Paul [*which includes that to the* Hebrews] *are known and clear.* Afterwards, ſpeaking of *Clement*'s Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, *in which*, ſays he, *are inſerted ſeveral Paſſages out of the Epiſtle to the* Hebrews, *and ſometimes in the very Words*, he adds, ‘ *From whence it is moſt evident, that this cannot be a modern Writing* [St. *Clement* having been a Diſciple and Companion of St. *Paul*,] and then he goes on, ‘ *Wherefore it ſeems with good Reaſon to be added to his other Epiſtles. For St.* Paul *having written to the* Hebrews *in their own Language, the Tranſlation of it* [*into the* Greek *Tongue*] *is aſcrib'd by ſome to St.* Luke, *and by others to* Clement. Which Teſtimonies warrant what we find in *Theodoret*, in the Preface to his Commentary upon this Epiſtle, Euſebius *confeſs'd, that this was the Epiſtle of the moſt divine* Paul, *and affirm'd, that all the Ancients were of that Opinion*; And *Photius* a Collector in the ninth Century, at the ſame time that he cites an obſcure Writer who had ſaid that *Hippolytus* and *Irenæus* did not believe this Epiſtle to be St. *Paul*'s, immediately adds, *But* Clement, *and* Euſebius, *and the main Body of the divine Fathers, reckon this among his other Epiſtles.* And the ſame *Photius* mentions that Opinion of *Hippolytus*, as one, among others, of his crude and indigeſted Aſſertions.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 3. — l. 6. c. 20. — l. 5. c. 38. Theodoret. Pref. Phot. Bibl. Cod. 232. Gobarus. Phot. Bibl. c. 121.

'Tis true, *Euſebius* takes Notice, that *ſome* did not

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 3.

not receive the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, becauſe they ſaid it was not receiv'd by the *Roman* Church; which he particularly affirms of *Caius*, and adds, in a more qualified Senſe, *That* ſome *of the* Romans *did not* ſuppoſe *it to be his.* But it muſt be remember'd, that *Caius* advanc'd this Opinion in a Diſpute with one, who affirm'd that Chriſtians *falling* from the Faith, ought not to be admitted to Penance, and who, without doubt, alledged againſt *Caius* that Paſſage in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews: It is* impoſſible *for thoſe who were once enlighten'd, and have taſted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the Power of the World to come; if they ſhall* fall away, *to renew them again to Repentance.* And as this became a common Controverſy in the *Latin* Church, which maintain'd the Opinion of *Caius* for reſtoring lapſed Chriſtians, againſt the *Montaniſts* firſt, and then againſt the *Novatians*; it was natural, in the Heat of Diſpute, to endeavour to weaken the Force of that Text, by raiſing a Doubt whether St. *Paul*, whoſe Name was not ſet to this Epiſtle as it is to the reſt, was the Author of it. But, that the Doubts concerning the Authority of it were not the ſame in the *Latin* Church from the Beginning, may be fairly preſum'd from this Epiſtle's being inſerted among the others, in the ancient *Latin* Verſion of the New Teſtament, which was made for the Uſe of that Church.

St. *Jerome*, who occaſionally takes Notice, that tho' it was receiv'd as St. *Paul*'s by ſome of the *Latin* Church, yet many doubted of it; expreſly condemns them for it, and confronts that Doubt with the Authority *of the* Greek *Church and all the Eaſtern Churches, who unanimouſly*

— l. 6. c. 20.

Preclus. Lapſi.

Tertull. de Pudic. c. 20.

Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

Hieron. Ep. ad Dardan. — ad Evagr.

nimouſly receiv'd it; and who, undoubtedly, had a better Opportunity than the *Latin* Church, to enquire into the Authority of it. Which Determination, as of a Point in Queſtion before him, makes it plain, that his mentioning it with Tokens of Doubt in ſome other Places where he only quotes it *occaſionally*, was not the Reſult of his own Judgment, but a Deference he paid to the Opinion of the *Latin* Church. And as He expreſly declar'd his own Satisfaction, upon the Authority of the Ancients, 'That it was rightly aſcrib'd to St. *Paul*,' ſo has the whole *Latin* Church ſhewn themſelves to be convinced of their Error, by having for ſo many Ages receiv'd and inſerted it among his other Epiſtles. Mill. Proleg. p. 26.

That which gave the main Ground of Diſpute concerning the Writer of this Epiſtle, was the want of St. *Paul*'s Name at the Beginning, which has been already accounted for; and this led the Critical Enquirers into *Words* and *Phraſes*, to inſiſt upon the Argument from the *Stile* and *Manner* of writing in this Epiſtle, as different from that of St. *Paul* in his other Epiſtles. The Manner of Writing, ſay they, is more lofty, and the Stile rais'd to a greater Height, than in his other Epiſtles. But if it be, the Subject alſo is more lofty and exalted. 'The Dignity of Chriſt above the Angels, 'The Glory of Chriſt at the Right-hand of God, 'The heavenly Tabernacle, 'The everlaſting Prieſthood, 'Chriſt's mediating and interceding for us in the Preſence of God; 'And, in general, all thoſe high and heavenly Things, of which the legal Performances under the Moſaical Law were only Types and Figures; together with the *Wonders* wrought by the Patriarchs, Martyrs, and other famous Men, in vertue of their Faith. As therefore the Difference in Stile is of little Force in any Caſe,

ſince it is very common for the ſame Writer to vary his Stile, according to the Subject, the Occaſion, the Degrees of Earneſtneſs, *&c.* ſo here it is of no Force at all, when ſet up in Oppoſition to the Teſtimony of the beſt and moſt approved Writers among the Ancients; and when it is further conſider'd, that the Attempts to aſcribe the Epiſtle to others (*Luke*, *Clement*, *Apollos*) are founded only upon ſome remote Conjectures, and not countenanc'd by ancient Teſtimonies; otherwiſe than as they are conſider'd under the Character of *Writers* and *Reporters* of St. *Paul*'s Doctrine. To which I muſt add, that thoſe early Differences in Opinion were not ſo much about the *Authority* of the Book, as about the Author; they who had their Doubts whether St. *Paul* was the Writer, readily acknowledging that the Epiſtle came from a Perſon *divinely inſpired*. This was the Caſe with all thoſe of old, who believed it to be written in *Hebrew* by St. *Paul*, and tranſlated into *Greek* by ſome one of the Apoſtolical Perſons juſt now mention'd (which, whether true or not, was a prevailing Opinion among the Ancients;) and alſo with thoſe others, who ſuppoſed it to be drawn up by ſome Apoſtolical Perſon, agreeably to the *Senſe* and *Meaning* of St. *Paul*; and with *Tertullian*, who aſcrib'd it to *Barnabas*, an Apoſtle, and Companion of St. *Paul*. And the ſame has been the Caſe with more modern Writers; as appears by the Declarations of two Divines (both of them remarkable for a *Latitude* of Thought in religious Matters) even while they are giving their Reaſons, why they do not think it to have been written by St. *Paul*. *It does not* ſeem, ſays one, *to have been written by St.* Paul, *but neither can it be* clearly deny'd *to be his. For 'tis probable, it was written*

See before, p. 43.

Tertull. de Pudic. c. 20. Acts xiii. 2, 4.

Limbourg. Pref. to Comment. upon Hebr.

written by one of St. Paul's Companions, *with his Privity, and agreeably to his Doctrine:* to which he adds, 'I acknowledge the *divine* Authority of this Epiſtle.' And, ſays another, *Whoever reads it with Attention, will ſee every where the* Apoſtolical Doctrine *concerning the Controverſies between the Chriſtians and* Jews *or Judaiſing Chriſtians of thoſe Days*; from whence he infers, 'That it muſt be written before the Deſtruction of the Temple, becauſe after that, and the *Extinction of the Levitical Worſhip, and the Deſtruction of a great Part of the Jewiſh Nation*, there could ſcarce be any Occaſion for entring into thoſe Controverſies; nor is there in it the leaſt Footſtep of any *Opinions, Diſputes*, or *Matters*, later than the Apoſtolick *Age*.' And again, '*Neither the* Matter, *nor the* Manner of explaining, *nor the* Language, *breathe any thing but what is* Apoſtolical, *and of* divine Inſpiration; *in which, I and all others who have written concerning this Epiſtle, do agree; however we may differ about the Author*.' Le Clerc, Hiſt. Eccl. Ann. 69.

Beſides this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, there were ſome others that the whole Chriſtian Church did not receive ſo ſoon as thoſe already mentioned concerning which there was never any Doubt. Theſe are, the *Epiſtle of St. James, the Second Epiſtle of St. Peter, the ſecond and third of St. John*, and that of St. *Jude*. Concerning theſe, it ſhall be particularly ſhown, that each of them was received *early*; and there is this plain Reaſon, why they were not received by all Chriſtians *ſo early* as the reſt, That they were written either to particular Perſons, as the ſecond and third of St. *John*, or to the Jewiſh Converts *diſperſed* in ſeveral Countries, as the ſecond of St. *Peter* and St. *James*, Pag. 35.

or to the Chriſtians in general, as the Epiſtle of St. *Jude*. And ſince the Satisfaction to be given to particular Churches that they were genuine, depended upon the View of the original Letters, and of the Evidence of thoſe who carried and thoſe who received them; it is manifeſt at firſt ſight, that this Satisfaction might be had much more readily, when it was known to what particular Churches this or that Epiſtle was directed, and where the Originals remained, and both the Meſſenger and they who received it from his hands might be ſpoke with; than it could be had where the Epiſtles were directed to Chriſtians in general as diſperſed throughout the Empire, and while it remained uncertain, in what particular City or Country either the Originals or the Evidences of their being ſo were to be met with. The not receiving theſe ſo early and univerſally as the reſt, is an Argument of the Care taken by particular Churches to be *thoroughly* ſatisfied, that what they admitted was really written by Perſons divinely inſpired; and the receiving them ſo univerſally as they afterwards did, is as good an Argument that they had received due Satisfaction concerning them. Nor can any poſſible Reaſon be aſſigned, why the whole Chriſtian Church, *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern*, ſhould for ſo many Ages have put theſe Epiſtles upon the ſame foot of Authority with the others which had been univerſally received, but that all ground of doubting was by Degrees removed, and every Church had received full Satisfaction that they were written by the inſpired Perſons whoſe Names they bore, or to whom they were aſcribed. We find this to be the Caſe in the fourth Century, when theſe were received in the *Greek* Church as of

divine Authority by the Council of *Laodicea*; and forty Years after, the ſame was ſolemnly declared to be the Senſe of the *Latin* Church in the Decretal Epiſtle of *Innocent* I. which was alſo confirmed eighteen Years after by a publick Decree of the Council of *Carthage*.

But long before theſe ſolemn and general Recognitions of their Authority, they had been received as genuine and authentick by many Churches as well as Writers. So *Euſebius* ſays of them all, "That however they were reckoned among the *doubtful* Books, they were acknowledged by *many*." Euſeb. l. 3. c. 25.

But to deſcend to particulars. The ſame *Euſebius* ſays of the Epiſtle of St. JAMES, That it was publickly read in *very many* Churches, together with the others. And two peculiar Reaſons may be aſſigned why it was thought ſpurious by ſome, and doubtful by others, and not ſooner received by *all*; one, that tho' it is expreſsly under the name of *James*, yet there being *more* Perſons of that name ſpoken of in the New Teſtament, a Diſpute aroſe to which of them it ought to be aſcribed; and the other, that what he ſays of the Neceſſity of *Works* in order to juſtify Men in the Sight of God, ſeemed to contradict what St. *Paul* had delivered concerning Juſtification by Faith alone. And St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles being univerſally receiv'd, they who believed or ſuſpected that contrariety in Doctrine, muſt reject the other of courſe, or at leaſt ſuſpend their Opinion about it. But as theſe Doubts vaniſh'd in particular Churches, and it appeared that St. *Paul* and St. *James* were ſo far from contradicting each other, that one meant the No-neceſſity of obſerving the Ceremonial Law, and the other the Neceſſity of Euſeb. l. 2. c. 23. Ibid.

obſerving the Moral Law; the one, That *Works* of what kind ſoever, without Faith, are ineffectual to Salvation, and the other, That Faith *without* Works cannot ſave; no Scruple was made of putting it upon the ſame Foot with the other Epiſtles; in point of Authority. *Euſebius* ſays, that not many of the Ancients mention'd it; and their Silence is already accounted for: but *Jerom* tells us, that it obtain'd *Authority* by Degrees, and we find it currently cited, like other Scriptures, by the Fathers of the fourth Century, and particularly by *Jerom* himſelf, as written by *James the Apoſtle*, and the *Brother of our Lord:* So that in the Words of a learned Commentator, '*They that doubted of it before, did in the fourth Century embrace the Opinion of thoſe that received it; and from thence no Church nor Eccleſiaſtical Writer ever doubted of it; but on the contrary, all the Catalogues of the Books of Scripture, whether publiſh'd by General or Provincial Councils*, &c. *number it among the Canonical Scriptures.*"

Euſeb. l. 2. c. 23. Jerom de Jac. Mill. Proleg. p. 24. Jerom Ep. ad Paul. --- Contra Jovin. c. 24.

The SECOND Epiſtle of St. PETER has been already obſerved to be one of thoſe which *Euſebius* mentions as queſtion'd, but which alſo were aknowledg'd by *many* as genuine. And this ſhows, that when it is ſaid by him that the ancient Fathers acknowledged but *one* Epiſtle of St. *Peter*, *i. e.* the *Firſt*, it muſt be meant, *Univerſally* and *without Exception*; with reference to the *Second*, which was not *ſo* acknowledg'd. St. *Jerom* grounds this doubt concerning the ſecond Epiſtle, upon the difference from the firſt in point of *Style*. But this is true, in ſtrictneſs, of the ſecond Chapter only, which is as different in Style from the firſt and third Chapters, as it is from the firſt Epiſtle; being, as to the

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 25. —l. 3. c. 3. —l. 6. c. 25. Jerome in the Word *Petrus.*

the Matter of it, manifeſtly taken from ſome *Jewiſh* Book, which gave an Account of the Scoffers before the Flood who derided *Noah*'s Prediction of it, and applied by St. *Peter* to the falſe Teachers who were crept in among the Chriſtians, and derided their *Expectation* of Deliverance from the Perſecutions they were under, grounded upon what our Saviour and his Apoſtles had told them concerning the Judgments that were to come upon the *Jewiſh* Perſecutors. As to the Style of that ſecond Chapter, it is throughout *lofty* and *pompous*; and in that reſpect different from the Style of the other two. But is this a Suggeſtion fit to be oppos'd to the many Teſtimonies of its being St. *Peter*'s, *viz.* 'Its bearing the Name of *Simon Peter*, by which he is ſo frequently ſpoken of in the Goſpels.' 'The Expreſs mention it makes of a *former* Epiſtle he had written to them, and the viſible *Connection* between the two Epiſtles (the *Second* being written to arm the Chriſtians againſt the Uneaſineſs they were under, upon the *Delay* of that Deliverance which the *firſt* had promis'd:) 'The Mention he makes of his approaching Diſſolution, *Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my Tabernacle, even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me*; which probably relates to what our Saviour intimated to St. *Peter* of the *time* of his giving Teſtimony to the Goſpel by his Death, that it ſhould be before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and the expreſs mention of what he *heard* and *ſaw* at the Transfiguration on the Mount, where none of the Diſciples were with Chriſt, except *Peter*, *James* and *John*. To all which it muſt be added, That there is a fair Preſumption of its being written by an *Apoſtolical* Perſon, from his uſing

2 Pet. iii. 1.

2 Pet. i. 14.

John xxi. 22.

2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18.

Mat. xvii. 1.

the

2 Pet. iii. 2, 15. the Style of our beloved *Brother Paul*; and we don't find it was ever aſcrib'd to any other of that Character. So far from this, that St. *Jerom*, where he takes Notice of the Difference in Style as the Foundation of the Doubts concerning it, ſolves the Difficulty, not by denying this Epiſtle to be St. *Peter*'s, which could not be deny'd for the Reaſons abovemention'd, but by ſuppoſing, that in the two Epiſtles they were two different hands who expreſs'd his Sentiments in *Greek*. Whether this was ſo, or not; it ſhows that in St. *Jerom*'s Opinion, the Arguments for its being St. *Peter*'s could not be got over; and in this Opinion, the Writers of that and the following Ages, both in the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Church, concur with great unanimity.

Jerom. in the Word *Petrus*.

Mill. Proleg. p. 25.

The Objection, and the only Objection, againſt receiving the Epiſtle of St. JUDE at firſt, was his citing the Prophecy of *Enoch*; but it is really hard to find where the Force of the Argument lies, That becauſe an Apoſtle cites out of another Book (tho' we ſuppoſe it Apocryphal) a Paſſage very good in itſelf and very appoſite to his Purpoſe, therefore he could not be the Author of the Writing into which the Citation is grafted; tho' ſuch Writing bears his Name, and is confirmed to be His by ancient Authority, as in this Caſe it is by the joint Teſtimonies of *Tertullian*, *Clement* of *Alexandria*, and *Origen*, who expreſsly cite it as St. *Jude*'s; wherein alſo there is a great Unanimity among the Writers of the ſucceeding Ages, both *Greek* and *Latin*.

Jerom. Catal. Jude.

Jude 14, 15.

Tertull. de Ornat Mul. l. 1. Clem. Alex. Pædag. l. 3. c. 8. Orig. Comm. in Matth. Tom. 11. p. 223.

The SECOND and THIRD Epiſtles of St. JOHN, are ſo far from being liable to the Objection of a Difference in Style from the *firſt*, which was univerſally received as his; that the

Mill. Proleg. p. 25.

manner

manner of writing is remarkably the ſame in all the three; and of the thirteen Verſes which make the whole ſecond Epiſtle, ſeveral are manifeſtly the ſame *in Senſe*, and ſome *word* for *word*. None of the three are under the Name of St. *John*, and in that reſpect the two laſt are of equal Authority with the firſt; but the ſecond and third are written under the Style of *Elder*, which peculiarly ſuits the Age as well as Character of St. *John*, who was above ninety Years old when they were written, and had the Direction and Government of all the *Aſiatick* Churches. Conſidering how very ſhort theſe two Epiſtles are, and that ſeveral things contained in them are alſo to be found in the firſt Epiſtle, it is not to be expected that many Citations out of them ſhould be met with in the Writers of the Church, either Ancient or Modern. But it ſo falls out, that *Irenæus* in the ſecond Century cites three Verſes word for word, out of the ſecond Epiſtle, under the Name of *John the Diſciple of our Lord*; and, that no Doubt may remain whether he might not mean *John the Preſbyter*, whom we find mention'd in *Euſebius* as one of Chriſt's Diſciples, or any other *John* but *John* the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt; he cites two other Paſſages to the very ſame Purpoſe, one taken out of the firſt Epiſtle and the other out of the Goſpel of St. *John*, and all the three as taken out of the Writings of one and the ſame Perſon. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, citing a paſſage out of the firſt Epiſtle, calls it his *larger* Epiſtle; which ſuppoſes one, at leaſt, that was not ſo large. *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*, contending for an Opinion he had entertain'd, that St. *John* was not the Writer of the *Apocalypſe*, makes it one Argument

2 John 7, 8, 11. Irenæus l. 1. c. 13. §. 2. —— l. 3. c. 18.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 39.

Clem. Alex. Strom l. 2.

Euſeb. l. 7. c. 25.

ment, that the Name is ſet to the Apocalypſe, whereas no Name is ſet to the ſecond or third Epiſtle, which he ſays were then uſually aſcribed to him. And *Origen*, where he tells us that *all* did not receive theſe two Epiſtles, implies that the *greateſt part* did. The Occaſion of writing them is ſuppoſed with great probability to have been, the Report made of the Liberality of the *Elect Lady* and of *Gaius*, by certain Perſons whom St. *John* had recommended to the Churches of *Aſia* for the furtherance of the Goſpel; and theſe Acknowledgments of the Liberality of each, muſt come from one and the ſame hand, namely, that upon whoſe Recommendation it was beſtowed.

Circ. An. 260. Euſeb. l. 6. c. 25. Mill. Proleg. p. 18.

Altho' the Book of REVELATIONS is of a different Nature from the Epiſtles, as relating more to the State of the Chriſtian Church in *future* times, than to the Doctrines at firſt deliver'd to it; yet becauſe it is part of the New Teſtament, and one of the Books about which Doubts have been rais'd, whether or no they were written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear; I will here lay down the many cogent Reaſons there are for concluding it to have been written by St. *John* the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, and not by any other. In the firſt Verſe, it is called *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt to his Servant John*, and at the ninth Verſe it is ſaid, *I John was in the Iſle that is called* Patmos *for the Word of God and for the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*. Now *Euſebius*, ſpeaking of the Perſecution of the Chriſtians by the Emperor *Domitian*, mentions St. *John the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt* as then baniſh'd to the Iſle of *Patmos*. The ſame is mention'd by *Tertullian*; and *Clemens Alexandrinus* ſpeaks of his Return from thence to *Epheſus* after the Death

Rev. i. 1, 9.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 18. Tertull. de Præſcrip. c. 36. Euſeb. l. 3. c. 23.

Death of *Domitian*; and there is no Pretence that any other *John* was baniſh'd to that Iſland. *Juſtin Martyr*, in his Dialogue with *Trypho* the Jew, expreſsly aſcribes it to *John*, *one of the Apoſtles of Chriſt*. *Irenæus* mentions it as the *Revelation of John the Diſciple of our Lord*; and that he meant St. *John* the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, appears from what he tells us concerning the time when this Revelation was made to him, *viz.* about the *latter End of the Reign of Domitian*, which was the time when he was in the Iſland of *Patmos*; and yet more clearly, by telling us it was the Diſciple who *lean'd upon Jeſus's Boſom at Supper*. *Tertullian* alſo cites it expreſly under the Name of *John the Apoſtle*; and *Origen*, where he ſpeaks of the Baniſhment of *John* the Brother of *James* into that Iſland, ſpeaks alſo of the Revelation there made to him, and cites the Book under his Name. Likewiſe, the Stile given by the Ancients to the Writer of this Book, and affixt to the Title of it, I mean, * The *Divine*, is uſually ſuppos'd to refer to the firſt Verſe of St. *John*'s Goſpel, in which he aſſerts the † *Divinity* of Chriſt.

Juſt. Mart. Dial. Tryph. Iren. l. 4. c. 37, 50. Ibid. l. 5. c. 26. Ibid. l. 5. c. 30. Ibid. l. 4. c. 37. Tertul. contra Marc. l. 3. c. 14. Origen. Commen. Matth. p. 417. * Θεόλογος. † Θεὸς ὁ λόγος.

In theſe Authorities there are ſeveral Circumſtances which give a *peculiar Force* to them in the preſent Point. In general, what they ſay, is deliver'd without the leaſt Mark of *Doubt* or *Heſitation*. And as to the particular Writers, *Irenæus* was the Diſciple of *Polycarp*, and *Polycarp* of St. *John*; and he tells us, he had a Paſſage in this Book explain'd to him by thoſe who had *ſeen* John *Face to Face*. *Juſtin Martyr* was converted to the Chriſtian Faith within thirty eight Years after the Writing of the Apocalypſe, and within fifty four Years from that Time

Iren. l. 5. c. 30.

he wrote his Dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*. Thoſe ſeveral Fathers who give Teſtimony to the Authority of the Apocalypſe as written by *John* the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, did not all dwell in *Aſia*, but in ſeveral other Parts of the World, whoſe Senſe they may be preſumed to ſpeak, as well as their own: *Irenæus* at *Lions* in *Gaul*, *Clemens* and *Origen* in *Egypt*, and *Tertullian* in *Africa*. And it is a poor Evaſion of the Authority of thoſe ancient Writers, to alledge that ſome of them had their peculiar Notions about *other* Points; as if a Singularity of Opinion in this or that Doctrine, could render them incompetent Witneſſes to a Matter of Fact, which they had ſo good Opportunity to know.

Their Authority is further ſtrengthened by this, that there is no Ground or Colour for the two Conjectures of the Apocalypſe being written by *John* the Preſbyter, or by *Cerinthus*. There is no Pretence to ſay, that the firſt was baniſh'd into the Iſle of *Patmos*; and, as to the ſecond, his Principles 'That Chriſt was a meer Man, and, 'That he was not to riſe from the dead till the general Reſurrection, are directly contrary to the Doctrine of the Apocalypſe; and, moreover, *his* millenary State, was not the Life of *Saints*, as the Apocalypſe repreſents it, but the Life of *Libertines*.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 28.
Ibid. l. 7. c. 25.
Rev. i. 5, 7, 8, 11. —xxi. 6. —xxii. 13.

That there were ſo few Copies taken of this Book, in Compariſon of the other Books of the New Teſtament, was owing to the ſubject Matter of it, which was very obſcure, and related not ſo much to the *paſt* or *preſent*, as to the *future* State of the Chriſtian Church, in which the generality of Chriſtians were not directly concern'd. For this Reaſon, it was not join'd at firſt to the

Orig. Comm. in Matth. p. 220.

the *Evangelical* or *Epiſtolary* Canon, but was conſider'd as a Writing by itſelf, and of a different Nature from the reſt; neither was it directed to be read publickly in the Church, becauſe of its Obſcurity, and the little Relation it had to the Goſpel State in thoſe Days. And this, together with the * *time* when it was written, accounts for the Silence of the moſt early Fathers concerning it, and for its being omitted in ſome of the Catalogues of the Books of Holy Scripture, particularly that of the Council of *Laodicea*; the Deſign of which Council was to enumerate ſuch Books as were to be *read publickly* in the Church, as appears by the expreſs Words of the Canon upon that Head.

* Not before the Year 96.

The difference in Style from St. *John*'s other Writings, and the mention of his *Name* here and not in the others, are alſo fairly accounted for by the difference of Subject; this being of the *Prophetick* Kind, and the Prophets uſually prefixing their *Names* to the Accounts of the Viſions and Revelations they had received from God; as we find in the Inſtances of *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and others. But notwithſtanding the difference in *Style*, we may obſerve, in ſeveral Inſtances, a *Co-incidence* in Expreſſion between this and his other Writings; and this generally, in ſuch Expreſſions as are not to be met with in the whole New Teſtament, except in the Goſpel and Epiſtles of St. *John*. In the Revelations, it is ſaid of Chriſt, that his Name is call'd, *The Word of God*; and in the Goſpel of St. *John* he is ſtyled *the Word*, and in his firſt Epiſtle, *the Word of Life*. In the Revelations, he is call'd *the Lamb*; and in the Goſpel of St. *John*, *the Lamb of God*. In the Revelations, the Name of Chriſt is, *He that*

Iſai. i. 1. Jerem. i. 1. Ezek. i. 3. Dan. vii. 2.

Rev. xix. 13.

Joh. i. 1. 1 Joh. i. 1.

Rev. v, 6, 12.

Joh. i. 24, 36.

Rev. iii. 7. — xix. 11. Joh. i. 14. — xiv. 6. 1 Joh. v. 20. Rev. ii. 17. Joh. vi. 32. Rev. i. 7. Joh. xix. 37. Rev. iii. 20. Joh. xiv. 23.

that is true,—He that is faithful and true; and in the Goſpel of St. *John*, *He that is true—full of Truth*, and *the Truth*. In the Revelations, *Manna* is applied to *ſpiritual* Food; and ſo it is applied in the Goſpel of St. *John*. In the Revelations, it is ſaid from the Prophet *Zechariah*, *Every Eye ſhall ſee him, and they alſo which* pierced *him*; and in the Goſpel of St. *John*, *They ſhall look* on him *whom they* pierced. In the Revelations, Chriſt ſaith, *If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will* come *to him, and* ſup *with him, and he with me:* In the Goſpel of St. *John*, *If a Man love me he will keep my Words, and my Father will love him, and we will* come unto him, *and make our* abode *with him.*

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 28. Ibid. l. 7. c. 25. Mill's Prol. p. 19. Rev. xx. 4, 5. Mill's Prol. p. 19

Thus ſtands the Authority of this Book, upon the Foot of ancient Teſtimonies. But when the Doctrine of the *Millenary* State began to be advanced under the Notion of a State in which *ſenſual Delights* were to be enjoy'd in the greateſt Perfection, and the Authority of the Revelations was alledged, tho' very unjuſtly, in ſupport of that carnal Doctrine; the Zeal of ſome Writers againſt this Doctrine, which was indeed exceeding wicked and corrupt, led them to raiſe Scruples about the Authority of the Book itſelf; which, tho' it ſpeaks of Chriſt's reigning a thouſand Years with the *Saints*, gives not the leaſt Ground to ſuppoſe that it will be a State of ſenſual Delights. On the contrary, it ſuppoſes the Members of that Kingdom to be *Martyrs* and other *Holy* Men who had preſerved themſelves from the Corruptions of the World. But after this Controverſy was over, the Scruples vaniſhed, and the Chriſtian Church receiv'd it among the other inſpir'd Writings, upon thoſe

thoſe ancient Teſtimonies that it was the Work of St. *John* the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt; tho' not being ſo proper as the reſt to be read publickly in the Church, it might in that reſpect be conſider'd ſometimes in a different Light from them.

This is not the only Inſtance, in which a particular Controverſy has led Men in the Heat of Diſpute, to call in Queſtion the Authority of particular Books of Scripture, which they thought unfavourable to the Doctrine they had eſpouſed: There are Inſtances of this kind, both ancient and modern. The *Manichees*, who held a monſtrous Opinion that the God of the Old Teſtament was not the God of the New, rejected St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, on account of the References he makes to the Old Teſtament, which ſhew both to be the Diſpenſations of one and the ſame God, and both to center in the Meſſiah. The *Ebionites*, who in ſome ſort received the Faith, but yet were zealous for the *Moſaical* Law, admitted no Goſpel but that of St. *Matthew*, as written particularly for the uſe of the *Hebrews*. The *Alogi* (or Deniers of the *Logos*) finding it impoſſible to reconcile their Doctrine to the Goſpel of St. *John*, and yet not venturing to except againſt the Authority of an Apoſtle, had no way left, but to deny that he was the Writer. The *Latin* Church, as I have already obſerved, finding themſelves preſs'd by ſome Paſſages in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* in favour of the *Novatian* Doctrine againſt the receiving of lapſed Penitents, ſhew'd too great an Inclination for ſome time, to cheriſh Doubts concerning the Author of that Epiſtle. And in later Days, it is well known, that the *Antinomians*, and others

Pag. 46.

who

who have carried the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone to too great a height, have alſo endeavoured to invalidate the Epiſtle of St. *James*, which makes *Works* alſo a neceſſary Condition of our being juſtified in the Sight of God.

But however ſerviceable it may have been thought to the Advocates for this or that peculiar Tenet, to raiſe Doubts about the Authority of this or that Epiſtle, as particularly relating to the Diſpute then in Hand; yet thoſe Doubts can be of no Service to the Cauſe of Infidelity, as long as the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and the general Doctrines of it, are ſupported by others, whoſe Writings have been *univerſally* received both as genuine, and as of divine Authority.

See before p. 35.

It appears by what has been ſaid upon this Head, ‘ That the Books of the New Teſtament were written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bear, or to whom they have been aſcrib'd, and that thoſe Writings are divinely inſpired; ‘ That the greateſt Part of thoſe Books have been unanimouſly received by all Chriſtian Churches from the beginning; ‘ That the Reaſon why ſome were not received ſo ſoon as others, was, the Neceſſity of particular Churches having Satisfaction as to their being written by ſome Apoſtle, or inſpired Perſon, and the Difficulty of obtaining ſuch Satisfaction in ſome Caſes more than in others, by reaſon of diſtance of Place, or other Circumſtances: ‘ That the Doubts which have ariſen concerning ſome particular Books, have generally been the Doubts, not of *Churches*, but of *Perſons*, and have been grounded either upon the want of expreſs mention of the Writer's Name, or there having been two Perſons of the ſame Name; both which

which Uncertainties are adjuſted, and the Doubts ariſing from them fully cleared, by Teſtimonies ancient and unconteſted; ‘ That the Differences of Style are either imaginary, or ſuch as the Differences in the Subjects and Occaſions fairly account for; and are by no means of Weight enough to be oppoſed to the poſitive Teſtimony of ancient and authen tick Writers; ‘ That thoſe, and the like Arguments, weak and inconcluſive in their Nature, have been generally laid hold on, on purpoſe to favour ſome Opinions which particular Perſons had eſpouſed, and which had no better Arguments to ſupport them, and, ‘ That theſe having yielded to the Force of Truth for ſo many hundred Years, and the Writings of the New Teſtament having been ſo long received by the whole Chriſtian Church as of Apoſtolical Authority, nothing more is needful to eſtabliſh them as ſuch, but to ſhew, that,

V. *The Books of the New Teſtament, in which the Doctrines delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles are contained, have been faithfully* Tranſmitted *to the Chriſtians of ſucceeding Ages.* And, in general, it reſts upon thoſe who call in queſtion the Fidelity of the Tranſmiſſion in this Caſe, to ſhew that any *other* Book whatſoever has ſuch and ſo many plain and ſtrong Teſtimonies of a *faithful* Tranſmiſſion, as the New Teſtament; leſt while their Zeal againſt Chriſtianity drives them into groundleſs Cavils and Doubts about the Authority of thoſe Books, they involve themſelves in the Abſurdity of rejecting all ancient Writings whatſoever, as not only alter'd from the Originals, but alter'd to ſuch a Degree as not to repreſent to us the genuine Meaning

ing and Deſign of their Authors. It is well known, how early the Chriſtian Religion was carried into almoſt all Parts of the *Roman* Empire, into Regions and Countries very numerous and very diſtant from one another; and as Chriſtianity ſpread, Copies of the New Teſtament ſpread with it, and not only remain'd in the Hands of Numbers of private Chriſtians, but were publickly received and read in their religious Aſſemblies. So that if one *Perſon* had attempted to alter and corrupt his Copy, it would quickly have been diſcover'd by the reſt; or if a whole *Country* had attempted it, the Copies throughout all other Countries would have been ſo many Teſtimonies of the Fraud. If therefore we could ſuppoſe the ancient Chriſtians ever ſo much *inclined* to alter and corrupt, none of them could have attempted it with the leaſt Probability of Succeſs: And what render'd it yet more impracticable, was, the Appeal that might be made, upon any Suſpicion of Forgery, to the Authentick Writings, remaining and kept with the greateſt Care in the Archives of ſeveral Churches that had been planted by the Apoſtles; to which *Tertullian* * expreſly refers in his Reaſonings againſt the Hereticks of thoſe Times, as then in being, and to be freely conſulted. But what ſhould *tempt* or *incline* the firſt Chriſtians to corrupt Books that contained thoſe Truths, on which they grounded all their Hopes, and for which they were ready to ſacrifice their Lives? Books, which they kept with ſo much Care, and held ſacred to ſuch a Degree, that if any Chriſtian happened to be perſuaded by Threatnings and Cruelties to deliver them up to the Heathen Perſecutors, they were put under the ſevereſt Penance by the Church; and we know ſome choſe

* Tertull. de Præſcript. adv. Hæreticos.

thoſe to die rather than deliver them. Many Paſſages alſo cited out of thoſe Books are found in the moſt early Writers of the Church, which appear to be the ſame that we now have in our printed Copies. Controverſies aroſe in the Church as early as the ſecond Century; and as both Sides appeal'd to thoſe Writings, ſo if either had changed and corrupted them, the Cheat muſt have been diſcover'd, and the Authors of the Corruption expos'd by their Adverſaries; they who were concerned in thoſe Controverſies being many of them Perſons who wanted neither Learning nor Penetration. The ſame Writings were early tranſlated out of the *Greek* into other Languages (*Syriack*, *Latin*, &c.) between which and the Original *Greek* there is the greateſt Agreement in *Senſe* and *Matter*. Add to all this, That many ancient written Copies, of thoſe early Tranſlations, and alſo of the original *Greek*, have been preſerved to our own Times, and procured by learned Men out of the ſeveral Countries in *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, where Chriſtianity was planted in the moſt early Ages; and ſuch Copies have been found, upon the exacteſt Collation, to agree with thoſe that are now us'd in the Chriſtian Church, with much leſs Variation than is allow'd, in all other Writings, to be fairly plac'd to the Miſtakes and Overſights of Tranſcribers.

For as to the Objection from the great *Number* of various Readings which have been found upon comparing thoſe Copies, it is of no manner of Weight. It is indeed fairly preſum'd, that the Providence of God would preſerve inſpir'd Writings, which were intended for the *perpetual* Inſtruction of the Church, pure and uncorrupt, as to the *Doctrines* contained in them; but it is not pretended that the *Tranſcribers*

bers of thoſe Writings were ſecur'd by any extraordinary Interpoſition of Providence, from every the leaſt Error in *copying* them. It was neceſſary that the Books themſelves ſhould be written under the immediate Direction of the Holy Spirit, becauſe the Things to be deliver'd in them were above the Reach of natural Reaſon, and nothing leſs than divine Inſpiration could make them a perpetual Rule to the Church. But the faithful *Tranſmiſſion* of them to future Ages might be ſufficiently prov'd, upon the ſame Foot and in the ſame manner as the faithful Tranſmiſſion of any other ancient Writings. So that it reſts upon thoſe who urge this Argument againſt the Books of the New Teſtament, to ſhew that thoſe various Readings do at all affect the *Doctrines* of Chriſtianity, or that ſuch Variety in any one Place renders any one Doctrine doubtful, that is not fully and clearly deliver'd in other Parts of the New Teſtament. On the contrary, I believe it may be ſafely affirm'd, that every ſingle Copy would exhibit a true and juſt Account of Chriſtianity; where there is an honeſt Diſpoſition to learn, and (in order to that) to correct the Errors of Tranſcribers, by comparing Places of the ſame Import and Tendency with one another; making the uſual Allowances for ordinary Slips of the Pen.

If the Number of Various Readings in the New Teſtament, as they have been publiſh'd from Time to Time by learned Men, ſhould be granted to be greater than in other ancient Writings, as they are not; there are two Things that would plainly account for it: The firſt, that the Copies which were taken of this Book before the Uſe of Printing, infinitely exceeded

in

in Number the Copies of any other ancient Book whatſoever; and the more the Copies are, the more numerous of courſe will the various Readings be: The ſecond, that no ancient Writings whatſoever have been examin'd with the ſame Care, and the Copies collated with the like Exactneſs, and the various Readings ſet down even to a Difference as to Syllables, Letters, and Order of Words, as has been done in thoſe of the New Teſtament; which greatly increaſes the *Number* of Readings, of how little *Importance* ſoever moſt of them may be. But at the ſame time, it is very certain that the Number of Copies greatly *ſtrengthens* the Authority of the Books, both by the *Agreement* of ſuch vaſt Numbers fetch'd from all Parts of the World (juſt Allowance being made to the accidental Slips or Miſtakes of Tranſcribers, which cauſe no material Alteration either in Senſe or Doctrine,) and by the Light ariſing from the *Concurrence* of *many* Copies (ſuch eſpecially as are ancient) in one and the ſame Reading, by which we are enabled to determine the *true Reading* upon a ſure Foundation. On the other hand, when the Copies are few, the Errors of Tranſcribers in many Caſes are not to be ſet right upon any other Foundation than mere Conjecture. This is the general Senſe of learned Men, as being evidently founded upon Reaſon and Experience; and it appears to be ſo, from the great Endeavours that are uſed by all ſuch as undertake to give correct Editions of ancient Authors, to procure as many *written* Copies as they can; and it alſo appears to be true in Fact, that where the Copies were few, Editions have been very faulty and imperfect; where many, very correct and accurate; and in both Caſes

more faulty or more correct, in proportion to the Number of Copies, ſuch eſpecially as are of greateſt Antiquity; in which Reſpect, as well as in the Numbers both of *Copies* and *Tranſlations*, the New Teſtament has vaſtly the Advantage of all other ancient Writings whatſoever.

VI. *The Doctrines of the Apoſtles, contain'd in their* Epiſtles *and in the* Acts, *together with what is taught by our Saviour in the* Goſpels, *were* deſign'd *to be a* ſtanding Rule *of* Faith *and* Manners *to Chriſtians in all Ages, and were from the Beginning* conſider'd *and* receiv'd *as ſuch by the Churches of Chriſt.*

That thoſe Writings were *Deſign'd* to be a ſtanding and perpetual Rule of Faith and Manners, appears from what has already been prov'd; that is, from the Inſtruction, Commiſſion, and Inſpiration, which the Apoſtles receiv'd from Chriſt, together with the Power of working Miracles in proof of their Commiſſion from him: And all this, in order to their declaring and opening to Mankind the whole Goſpel Diſpenſation, and every Part of it, and their perpetuating the Knowledge of it throughout all Generations to the End of the World. Theſe were full and ſufficient Declarations of the Will of Chriſt, That the whole Diſpenſation of his Goſpel ſhould be open'd by them, and be received by the World as coming *from him*, who had thus inſtructed and enlighten'd them, and effectually ſecur'd them againſt Error and Miſtake, and commiſſion'd them to act in his Name, and ratify'd that Commiſſion by Miracles, that no *Doubt* might remain but that they were ſent by him on purpoſe to make a full and clear Diſcovery of that Diſpenſation

to the World. And the neceſſary Conſequence of this is, in the firſt Place, That whatever they deliver'd concerning the *Doctrines* and *Duties* belonging to that Diſpenſation, was to be receiv'd by all Chriſtians as properly coming from Chriſt; and then, That no *other* Perſons having been inſpir'd and commiſſion'd to publiſh the Will of Chriſt, but the Apoſtles only, what they publiſh'd was the *whole* of what he intended to be publiſh'd. The contrary Suppoſitions plainly carry in them ſome one or more of theſe Abſurdities, That Chriſt granted a Commiſſion, without full Inſtructions for the Diſcharge of it; That Perſons who acted under the Guidance of the Holy Ghoſt, did not diſcharge it faithfully; and, That all the while he was confirming their Doctrine by Miracles, he left them liable to Error. The Inference from all which would be, That he came down from Heaven to eſtabliſh a new Religion, and impower'd ſpecial Meſſengers to publiſh it to the World, but yet left Mankind to the End of the World under an Uncertainty what his Religion was.

The Apoſtles, to give their Writings the Authority which juſtly belong'd to them, generally declare themſelves in the Beginning of their Epiſtles to be the *Apoſtles* and *Servants* of Jeſus Chriſt, that is, Perſons *ſent* by him, and ſpecially employ'd in his Service; and in other Parts of the Epiſtles, to the ſame Effect, the *Ambaſſadors*, the *Stewards*, and the *Miniſters* of Chriſt; all which Expreſſions imply, that they were the Perſons he had appointed to convey his Will to Mankind, and to diſpenſe to them the great Truths of the Goſpel, which till then were unknown to the World. *Let a Man ſo account* of us *as of the* Miniſters *of Chriſt* 1. Cor. iv. 1.

and

Rom. i. 5. *and* Stewards *of the Myſteries of God.* — *By whom* we *have received* Grace *and* Apoſtleſhip, *for Obedience to the Faith among all Nations for his Name.* And the ſame Apoſtle, ſpeaking particularly of the Redemption wrought for us by Chriſt, and our Reconciliation to God by his 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. Death, adds, *And hath given to* us *the* Miniſtry *of* Reconciliation, *to wit, that God was in Chriſt reconciling the World unto himſelf, not imputing their former Treſpaſſes unto them, and hath* committed *unto us the Word of* Reconciliation: *Now then we are* Ambaſſadors *for Chriſt, as though* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *God did beſeech you* by us. And elſewhere, upon the ſame Subject, *There is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus, who gave himſelf a Ranſom for all, to be* teſtified *in due Time: Whereunto I am ordained a* Preacher *and an* Apoſtle, *a* Teacher *of the* Rom. xv. 16. *Gentiles in Faith and Verity.* And again, *The* Miniſter *of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtring* Col. i. 25. *the Goſpel of God*; and, *I am made a* Miniſter *of Chriſt according to the* Diſpenſation *of God which is* given *to me, to fulfil* (i. e. fully to preach) *the Word of God.*

Next, as to the *Doctrines* deliver'd, they are 1 Cor. xiv. 37. ſpoken of as the *Commandments* of *God* and of *Chriſt. The Things that I write unto you are the* 2 Cor. ii. 12. Commandments *of the Lord*; and the Goſpel 1 Theſſ. ii. 2. preach'd was the *Goſpel* of Chriſt, and the *Goſpel* of God; *the* glorious Goſpel *of the Bleſſed God,* Rom. xv. 16. *which,* ſays St. *Paul, was* committed *to my Truſt.* And the ſame St. *Paul,* writing to the 2 Cor. xi. 7. *Theſſalonians,* ſays, *When ye received the Word* 1 Theſſ. ii. 2, 8, 9. *of God, which ye heard of us, ye receiv'd it not as the Word of* Men, *but as it is in truth the* 1 Tim. i. 11. Word of God. But when, upon a particular 1 Theſſ. ii. 13. Occaſion, he deliver'd only his own private Sentiments

Sentiments, he expreſly tells the *Corinthians*, *I have no* Commandment *from the Lord, yet I give my* Judgment. 1 Cor. vii. 25, 40.

Next, as to the *Guidance* and *Direction* under which their Doctrine was deliver'd, it has been already obſerv'd, That after the Apoſtles had receiv'd their Commiſſion to declare and publiſh the Goſpel to all Nations, they alſo receiv'd the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, who ſhould *teach them all Things, and bring all Things to their Remembrance whatſoever Chriſt had ſaid unto them,* and being the Spirit of *Truth*, ſhould guide them into all *Truth*. And ſo it is affirm'd by St. *Peter* of them all, that they preach'd the Goſpel *with* (or by) the Holy Ghoſt *ſent down from Heaven*; and it is ſaid of the particular Doctrine, of the Gentiles being Fellow-Heirs with the Jews, that *it was reveal'd to the holy* Apoſtles *and* Prophets (in general) by the Spirit. It has alſo been before obſerv'd particularly of St. *Paul*, that he receiv'd his Doctrine by immediate Revelation; and tho' he was not of the Number of thoſe upon whom the Holy Ghoſt deſcended at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, he declares in many Places of his Epiſtles that he acted under the *Guidance* of the ſame Spirit: *We ſpeak the Wiſdom* of God in a Myſtery — *the Things which God hath reveal'd unto us by his* Spirit.—*We have* the Mind *of Chriſt*; —*He therefore that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not Man but God, who hath alſo given unto us his* holy Spirit.—*We have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit* which is of God, *that we may know the Things that are freely* given *us of God*; *Which Things alſo we ſpeak, not in the Words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but which the* Holy Ghoſt *teacheth.* He tells the *Corinthians*, that he will give them a Proof

Page 24.

John xiv. 26. — xvi. 13.

1 Pet. i. 12.

Epheſ. iii. 5.

Page 30.

1 Cor. ii. 7, 10, 16.

1 Theſſ. iv. 8.

1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

2 Cor. xiii. 1.

a Proof *of Chriſt* ſpeaking *in him*; and deſcrib-
1 Theſſ. iv. 15. ing the *Order* in which the Dead are to riſe again (*viz.* thoſe who are dead, and thoſe who ſhall be found alive at the general Reſurrection) he declares, *This we ſay unto you by the* Word *of*
2 Pet. iii. 15. *the Lord.* And St. *Peter* affirms, that what St. *Paul* had written to the Chriſtians, was *according to the Wiſdom given unto him*; and in the ſame Place he ſets St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles upon the ſame Foot with the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, which the Jewiſh Converts, to whom St. *Peter* was writing, did moſt firmly believe to be inſpir'd.

If it be ſaid that theſe are the Teſtimonies of Perſons concerning *themſelves*, it is again to be remember'd, that the Writers of the Epiſtles are the ſame Perſons whom the Goſpels and the Acts of the Apoſtles teſtify to have been ſpecially commiſſion'd by Chriſt, and to have receiv'd from him the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and to have wrought many and great Miracles in his Name; and all this, on purpoſe to qualify them for publiſhing his Goſpel to the World, and to put it out of all Doubt that they were *Miniſters* and *Ambaſſadors* ſent by him, and that therefore entire Credit might be given to whatever they deliver'd in his Name, and their Doctrine be receiv'd by all Chriſtians as a true and full Account of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, or, in other Words, as a *Divine Rule* of Faith and Manners.

Accordingly, The Chriſtians of the moſt early Ages, declared and aſſerted in the cleareſt manner, that the Writings of the Apoſtles were divinely inſpir'd, and that, as ſuch, they became of courſe a Rule to all Chriſtians. *Clement*, a fellow Labourer of St. *Paul*, writes thus to the *Corinthians*:

† Clem. Ep. 1. ad Cor. §. 42, 47.

Corinthians: " The Apoſtles deliver'd the Go-
" ſpel to us, from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and
" Jeſus Chriſt from God. Wherefore, Chriſt
" was ſent by God, and the Apoſtles by Chriſt.
" Having therefore receiv'd their Inſtructions,
" and being confirm'd in the Faith by the
" Word of God and the fullneſs of the Holy
" Ghoſt; they went forth, preaching that the
" Kingdom of God was at hand:" And he bids them conſider the Epiſtle of *the bleſſed Apoſtle Paul, which was aſſuredly ſent to them by the* aſſiſtance *of the* Spirit. *Polycarp* *, the Diſciple of St. *John*, ſays to the *Philippians* concerning St. *Paul*, *Being preſent, he taught you the Word of* Truth *with all exactneſs and ſoundneſs; and being abſent, wrote an Epiſtle to you, which if you look into, you may be* built up *in the* Faith *that was deliver'd to you.* *Theophilus* † of *Antioch*, in the ſecond Century, calls the Evangeliſts *the Bearers of the Spirit*; and ſays of the Prophets and Apoſtles, that they *ſpoke by one and the ſame* Spirit. *Irenæus* *, in the ſame Century, ſays, That *the Scriptures were dictated by the Word of* God *and his* Spirit; and, † *That one and the ſame* Spirit *preach'd in the Prophets, and publiſh'd in the* Apoſtles. And he has one whole Chapter *, to ſhew that the other Apoſtles as well as *Paul*, had their Knowledge by *Revelation* from God. He particularly blames thoſe as impious, who preſum'd to ſay, that the Apoſtles preach'd, before they had a *perfect Knowledge* of what they were to preach: For, ſays he, " After † our Lord was riſen " from the Dead, and they were endued by " the Holy Ghoſt with Power from on high, " they were fill'd with all Truths, and had " perfect Knowledge, and then went forth into " the Ends of the World, publiſhing the good

* Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. § 3.

† Theoph. ad Autol. l. 3.

* Iren. l. 2. c. 47.

† Iren. l. 3. c. 25.

* Iren. l. 3. c. 13.

† Iren. l. 3. c. 1.

" things which God hath provided for us, and " preaching Peace from Heaven unto Men." *Juſtin Martyr* *, in the ſame Century, ſpeaks of the Scriptures, as Writings *full of the Holy Ghoſt*. In the next Century, *Clemens Alexandrinus* † ſays, *The Apoſtles might well be call'd* Prophets, *one and the ſame* Holy Spirit *working in both*; and ſpeaking of the Prophets and Apoſtles jointly, he ſays, * *They had the* mind *of the* Prophetick *and* Inſtructing Spirit *ſecretly reveal'd to them*; and he calls the Apoſtles, in particular, *Diſciples of the Spirit*. *Origen** mentions the Goſpels, as acknowledged to be of *divine Authority* by all Churches; and ſpeaking of the Inſpiration of the Prophets, ſays, *That the ſame God* inſpir'd *the* Evangeliſts *and* Apoſtles; and he mentions thoſe ſacred Books, as *not of Men, but from the* Inſpiration *of the Holy Ghoſt, by the Will of the Father thro' Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſays, *There is nothing in the Prophets, or the Law, or the* Goſpels, *or the* Apoſtles (by which laſt is meant the Epiſtles) *that is not from the* Fullneſs *of God*; and, That *there is an entire* Harmony *and Agreement between the Old Teſtament and the New, between the Law and the Prophets, between the* Evangelical *and* Apoſtolical *Writings, and between the* Apoſtolical Writings *with relation to one another*; and both he and others frequently ſtile thoſe Writings, The *Oracles* of God, and The *Voice of God*.

* Juſtin Mart. Dial. with Trypho.
† Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 5.
* Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1.
† Orig. in Joh. p. 4, 5. Philocal. p. 7. 11, 21, 30.

What has been already ſaid, and repeated, concerning the Commiſſion which the Apoſtles receiv'd from Chriſt for publiſhing his Goſpel to the World, and his enduing them for that End with the Holy Spirit, and with the Power of working Miracles; abundantly ſhews, that whatever they deliver'd concerning the Nature of

of that Inſtitution, and the Doctrines and Duties properly belonging to it, was intended by Chriſt and his Apoſtles to be a *fixt* and *perpetual Rule* to the Chriſtian Church. And as they intended it, ſo the firſt Chriſtians *underſtood* and *receiv'd* it. The Goſpels were read in their Aſſemblies, † Juſt. as part of their publick Worſhip; The Exhor- Mart. A- tations of the Miniſters deliver'd in the ſame pol. 2. Aſſemblies, were founded upon the Portions which had been read out of thoſe Goſpels; They began early to write *Commentaries* upon the Books of the New Teſtament, as upon a ſacred Text; and Controverſies were finally determined by what ſhould appear upon Examination to be the true Meaning and Tenor of thoſe Books. Upon this Foundation it is, that *Irenæus* * atteſts the * Iren. Truth of his own Doctrine againſt one of the l. 3. c. 12. Hereticks of that time; *Let him*, ſays he, *examine what I have written*, and he will find it *conſonant to the* Doctrine of the Apoſtles, *and exactly agreeable to what they taught.* The ſame ancient Writer † ſpeaks of what the Apo- † Iren. ſtles taught, as the *Rule of Truth*; and calls the l. 3. c. 11, Goſpels *the Pillar and Foundation of the Church*; 12. and ſays of the Apoſtles, That *the Church throughout the World grounding themſelves upon their* Doctrine, *perſever'd in the ſelf-ſame Sentiments concerning God and his Son.* And, *We* * *have* * Iren. *not known the Methods of our Salvation from any* l. 3. c. 1. *others, than thoſe by whom the Goſpel came to us, which the* Apoſtles *preach'd, and afterwards, by the Will of God, deliver'd down to us* in Writing, *to be the* Foundation *and* Pillar *of our Faith.* He † charges the Hereticks with perverting both † Iren. the *Evangelical* and *Apoſtolical* Writings to ſuch l. 1. c. 7, Senſes as might favour their own Doctrines, and 15. with affirming the things which neither the *Prophets*

preach'd, nor *Chriſt* taught, nor the *Apoſtles* deliver'd; and that, while they went beyond the Scriptures, *they deſtroy'd the Bounds of Truth* *. And ſo *Tertullian* †; *Take away from Hereticks their Pagan Doctrines, and let them refer their Queſtions to the Deciſion of the Scriptures, and they will not be able to ſtand.* And elſewhere he * cenſures thoſe as weak, who think they can diſcourſe of Matters of Faith, otherwiſe than from the *Books* containing that *Faith.* To the ſame Purpoſe, *Clemens Alexandrinus* † ſays, *Let us not content ourſelves with the Teſtimonies of* Men, *but let us confirm that which comes in Queſtion by the* Word of God, *which is to be credited beyond all Demonſtrations; or rather is itſelf the only Demonſtration.*

* Memoria Veritatis.

† Tertull. de Reſurrect. c. 3.

* Tertull. de Præſcrip. c. 15.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 7.

Whether therefore we conſider, what the Commiſſion was which the Apoſtles receiv'd from Chriſt, or what the Gifts and Powers, by which they were enabled to diſcharge it; what they declar'd concerning their Authority and the Doctrine they deliver'd, or what the firſt Chriſtians believ'd and declar'd concerning them; In all and every of theſe Views, we ſee the cleareſt Evidence that the Matters and Doctrines contain'd in the New Teſtament, as coming from Perſons who were commiſſion'd and inſpired by Chriſt to publiſh his Religion to the World, were deſign'd to be a *fixt* and *perpetual* Rule to Chriſtians in all future Ages. And they were in fact receiv'd under that Character by the firſt Chriſtians, and, after the Increaſe of the Goſpel, by particular Churches, gradually, as theſe Churches came to a certain Knowledge of the ſeveral Books being written by Perſons divinely inſpir'd; and in proceſs of time, by the whole Chriſtian Church; upon a full and general

ral Conviction, that they were the Writings of ſuch Perſons, and that there was no juſt or reaſonable Ground of Doubt, either about the Books, or the Writers of them. And as I obſerv'd before, the Slowneſs and Caution of particular Churches in giving aſſent, is one good Argument, that they were *faithful* and *impartial* Witneſſes. So unjuſt have been the Suggeſtions of ſome, who yet bore no ill Will to Chriſtianity, That all the Books of the New Teſtament became authentick *at once*, by a ſolemn Act of the Church, and, that it was the Authority of the Church, that made them a *Rule* or *Canon* to all Chriſtians. On the contrary, particular Books were receiv'd by particular Churches, ſooner or later; according to the time of writing, and according to the different Opportunities they had of coming to the Knowledge of them, by reaſon of the different Diſtance of Cities and Countries from one another, and the different Degrees of Correſpondence among them. The Rule which determin'd them to admit the particular Books, was the Aſſurance they had, that they were written by Perſons divinely inſpir'd; and upon this (when it became clear to them upon due Enquiry and Examination,) they grounded the Authority of each Book. From henceforth, Writers cited the Books in Confirmation of the Doctrines and Duties of Chriſtianity, and the People conſider'd them as a divine Rule of Faith and Manners; both which we ſee as early as we have any of their Writings. And when by degrees, every particular Church was ſatisfied that all the Books were written by Perſons divinely inſpir'd, they publickly *declar'd* their Satisfaction in Councils occaſionally aſſembled to regulate the general Affairs

fairs of the Church. The Books were not therefore authentick, becauſe thoſe Declarations were made, but the Declarations were therefore made, becauſe the Books were authentick; the Church being conſider'd only as a *Witneſs* that they were written by the Perſons, whoſe Names they bear, and to whom they are aſcrib'd, and from whoſe Inſpiration they derive their Authority.

I am well aware, that in later Ages there have ariſen Men who would confine the Chriſtian Rule or Canon to the Writings of the Evangeliſts, and the Chriſtian Faith to the ſingle Article of believing *Jeſus to be the Meſſiah*; this ſeeming to have been ſufficient *at firſt* to gain Admittance into the Chriſtian Church, and the Truth of that Propoſition being abundantly atteſted by the four Goſpels. But it was not rightly conſider'd by thoſe Men, how *extenſive* that Article was, and how many more it included in it; the Aſſent to it being, in effect, an Acknowledgment that Jeſus was the *Son of God*, and the Baptiſm receiv'd in vertue of that Aſſent, an embracing of the Doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and both the Aſſent and the Baptiſm, a general Profeſſion of taking Chriſt for their Maſter; and that Profeſſion, a general Engagement to conform to all the Doctrines and Rules which he ſhould deliver, either by himſelf or by Perſons whom he ſhould commiſſion to make further Declarations of his Will. So that the Admiſſion into the Church by Baptiſm upon the Belief of that ſingle Article, was properly the admitting Perſons into the *School* of Chriſtianity, to be further *inſtructed* and *built up* in the Faith of Chriſt: and to conſider ſuch Admiſſion in any other Light, is juſt as if one ſhould argue that a Child is a complete Man, becauſe he has all the

Parts

Parts of a Man, and will by due *Nouriſhment* and *Inſtruction* grow up gradually to the Stature and Knowledge of a perfect Man. This is the Light in which the Apoſtles of our Lord conſider'd it. St. *Peter* writing to the Chriſtians diſpers'd in ſeveral Parts of the World, directs them *as new born* Babes (as thoſe who were yet tender and young in the Chriſtian Faith) *to deſire the ſincere Milk of the* Word, *that they may* grow *thereby*. And St. *Paul* tells the Chriſtians at *Corinth*, to whom he ſpoke as unto *Babes* in Chriſt, *I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.* And when he reproves the *Hebrews* for their ſlow Progreſs in the Knowledge of the Chriſtian Faith, he tells them; *When for the time ye ought to be Teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the firſt* Principles *of the* Oracles *of God, and are become ſuch as have need of* Milk *and not of ſtrong Meat: For every one that uſeth Milk, is unſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs, for he is a* Babe. *But ſtrong Meat belongeth to them that are of full Age, even thoſe who by reaſon of uſe* (in the Margin, it is *Habit* or *Perfection*) *have their Senſes exercis'd to diſcern both Good and Evil.* From whence he immediately infers, *Therefore leaving the Principles* (or firſt Rudiments) *of the Doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto* Perfection, *not laying again the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and of Faith towards God; of the Doctrine of Baptiſms, and of laying on of Hands, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead and of eternal Judgment.*

1 Pet. ii. 2.

1 Cor. iii. 1.

Heb. v. 12, 13, 14.

Heb. vi. 1, 2.

A late ingenious Writer*, who has traced-out the ſeveral Steps taken by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the firſt Promulgation of the Goſpel, had a true Notion of this, and calls the Propoſition,

* *Dr.* Burnet, *late Maſter of the* Charter-Houſe *in his Book* De Fide & Officiis, p. 117.

poſition, That Jeſus is the Meſſiah, the firſt *Entrance* and *Initiation* into the Chriſtian Faith; and adds, *That in the* Progreſs *of the Goſpel, the Apoſtles explain'd the Heads of the Chriſtian Faith more* fully *and* openly, *to the end that at length by their Preaching and Miniſtry the* whole *Will and Counſel of* God *might be manifeſted; that is, all things which ought to be believed and done to obtain eternal Life.* And, ſpeaking of the *Inſpi-*
† P. 120. *ration* † of the Apoſtles, he ſays, *The* Holy Ghoſt *was given them,* not only to bring to their *Remembrance* whatever they had heard from Chriſt, *but alſo, to* add *all ſuch things* as were neceſſary to fill up *and* complete *the Chriſtian Doc-*
* P. 121. *trine.* He ſays* further, That in the Acts of the Apoſtles we have *the firſt* Lineaments of a riſing Church, *and as it were the* Ground-work *of the*
† P. 138. *Chriſtian Faith*; and afterwards, where † he deſcribes the *gradual* opening of the Goſpel, he takes Notice, that the Apoſtles, *to whom was committed* the expounding *of that new Revelation,* deliver'd ſome Doctrines ſooner, and ſome later; and compares the Growth of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation to that of a *Flower*, which opens itſelf
* P. 139. gradually; and adds, that ſome of the *Myſteries* belonging to it, were more ſeaſonably deliver'd *after the* firſt Seeds *had taken root.*

Mr. Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity.

An ingenious Perſon, who at his firſt Tranſition from Enquiries merely rational to thoſe of Revelation, ſet himſelf to reduce the fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity to the narroweſt Compaſs he poſſibly could, ſeems not to have conſidered enough this *gradual Opening* of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, when he made that one Article "That Jeſus is the Meſſiah," the Belief of which was no more than the *firſt Entrance* into the Chriſtian Faith, to be the *whole*

whole of it; if he meant it in any other Senſe than as it carried in it a general Acknowledgment, that they who made that Profeſſion did thereby receive Chriſt for their Maſter, and were ready to embrace whatever Doctrines or Precepts ſhould come from him, with a ſincere Diſpoſition to be inſtructed in them. And, in truth, that he meant it in this Extent, and deſigned no more than a *ſpeculative* Enquiry about the Nature of Fundamentals, ſeems plain from what he adds, *That as for the* Page 300. reſt *of* Divine Truths, *there is nothing more required of a Chriſtian, but that he receive all the Parts of* Divine *Revelation with a Docility and Diſpoſition prepared to embrace and aſſent to* all Truths *coming from God; and ſubmit his Mind to whatſoever ſhall appear to him to bear that Character.* This was all that could be required of the firſt Converts to Chriſtianity, to whom the Goſpel Diſpenſation was not yet opened; but it follows not from thence, that no more was *neceſſary* to be believed by Chriſtians, *after* that Diſpenſation was fully opened: On the contrary, it follows, that an *actual* Belief of the Doctrines of the Goſpel, *after* a full Declaration made of them, was as neceſſary to make Men Chriſtians, as a *Readineſs* and *Diſpoſition* to receive them was *before*; and the way by which both approved themſelves to be true and ſincere Chriſtians, was an honeſt Diſpoſition to embrace all the Light that was afforded them, whether by Chriſt himſelf, or by thoſe whom he inſpired and commiſſioned for the opening and publiſhing his Goſpel to the World. And therefore the ſame Author ſpeaking of the Apoſtles, and their Writings, ſays, *Theſe Holy* Page 297. *Writers, inſpired from above, writ nothing but*

Truth, *and in moſt Places very weighty* Truths *to us now, for the* expounding, clearing, *and* confirming *of the* Chriſtian Doctrine. And in his later Years, when he had more maturely conſidered the Frame and Tenor of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, he calls the Writings of the New Teſtament, without Diſtinction, *Holy Scripture, Holy Writings*, the *Sacred Text, Writings dictated by the Spirit of God*; and ſays of the Writings of the Apoſtles, *That the Doctrines contained in them tend wholly to the* ſetting up *the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt in this World.* Particularly, of St. *Paul* and his Epiſtles, upon ſeveral of which he wrote a very uſeful and elaborate Commentary during his Retirement in his laſt Years, he ſays, That as to this Apoſtle, *he had the whole Doctrine of the Goſpel from God by immediate Revelation; that for his Information in the Chriſtian Knowledge, and the* Myſteries *and* Depths *of the Diſpenſation of God by Jeſus Chriſt, God himſelf had condeſcended to be his Inſtructor and Teacher; and that he had received the Light of the Goſpel from the Fountain and Father of Light himſelf*; and as to his Epiſtles, *That they were* dictated *by the* Spirit *of God.* In his Preface to the Commentary upon the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, after having enumerated ſome of the Particulars in which that Epiſtle opens the Goſpel Diſpenſation to Mankind, he adds, *Theſe are but* ſome *of the more general and more comprehenſive Heads of the Chriſtian Doctrine to be found in this Epiſtle. The Deſign of a* Synopſis *will not permit me to deſcend more minutely to Particulars; but this let me ſay, that he that would have an* enlarged *View of true Chriſtianity, will do well to ſtudy this Epiſtle.* To induce Men to the Study of the New Teſtament in general,

Pref. to his Commentary.

Ibid. p. 22.

Ibid. p. 16.

Ibid. p. 17.

general, he ſays, *The only way to be preſerved from Error, is to betake ourſelves in earneſt to the Study of the way to Salvation, in thoſe* Holy Writings *wherein God has revealed it from Heaven, and propoſed it to the World; ſeeking our Religion where we are ſure it is in truth to be found.* And, in a Letter written the Year before his Death, to one who had aſked him this Queſtion, What is the ſhorteſt way to attain to a true Knowledge of the Chriſtian Religion in the *full* and *juſt Extent* of it? his Anſwer is, *Study the Holy Scripture, eſpecially the New Teſtament; therein are contained the Words of eternal Life: It has God for its Author, Salvation for its End, and Truth without any Mixture of Error for its Matter.* And of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles, which he was more particularly led to ſpeak of in the Preface to his Commentary, he ſays, That the ſtudying and underſtanding them aright, will make thoſe who do it to *rejoice in the Light they receive from thoſe moſt uſeful Parts of Divine Revelation.*

Ibid. p. 24.

Poſthum. Works, p. 344.

This Writer alſo furniſhes us with an Anſwer to the Objection uſually made by Infidels and Scepticks, That if the Epiſtles were written upon particular *Occaſions* only, they would not have been written at-all if thoſe Occaſions had not happened, and that therefore the Chriſtian Faith was *compleatly* delivered before, in the Goſpels and the Acts of the Apoſtles. *The* Providence *of God*, ſays he, *hath ſo ordered it, that St.* Paul *has writ a great Number of Epiſtles* [and the ſame is true of thoſe that were written by *other* Apoſtles] *which tho' upon different* Occaſions, *and to ſeveral* Purpoſes, *yet are all confined within the Buſineſs of his* Apoſtleſhip, *and ſo contain nothing but Points of Chriſtian Inſtruction;*

Pref. to Comment. p. 21.

tion; amongſt which, he ſeldom fails to drop in and often to enlarge upon the great *and* diſtinguiſhing *Doctrines of our Holy Religion.* If the Writing of the Epiſtles was ordered by the *Providence* of God, the ſame Providence certainly intended that they ſhould be a *Rule* and *Direction* to the Chriſtian Church; and if the Providence of God had not ſo ordered it, that the Epiſtles ſhould be written, the ſame Providence would have found out ſome *other way* to open and explain the Chriſtian Revelation in the Manner they have done. The Queſtion therefore is not, what the State of Things would have been if the Epiſtles had *not* been written (which no Mortal can tell,) but the only Queſtion is, how the Matter ſtands, now they are written, and whether we are at liberty to conſider them otherwiſe than as Openings and Explanations of the Chriſtian Doctrine, when they come from Perſons divinely inſpir'd, and commiſſion'd by Chriſt to publiſh his Goſpel to the World; in virtue of which (as the other Writer before mention'd has truly ſaid) they were enabled and empower'd *to* add *all ſuch Things as were neceſſary* to fill up *and* compleat *the Chriſtian Doctrine.*

Burn. de Fide, &c. p. 120.

Whatever therefore we find in the Writings of the Apoſtles that concerns the Doctrine and Œconomy of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, whether it be further *Explanations* of what is more generally deliver'd in the Goſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles, or *Additions* to them; it is what they were empower'd by Chriſt and enabled by the Holy Ghoſt to deliver to the World, and ſo became a Rule of Faith and Practice to Chriſtians to the End of the World. Such are theſe that follow; The Miſery brought upon Mankind

Mankind by the Fall of *Adam*, and the Deliverance out of that Miſery as wrought for us by Chriſt: The Inſufficiency of the Moſaical Law for obtaining Salvation: The typical Nature of the Ceremonial Law as prefiguring Chriſt, the End of that Law and our great Sacrifice, High-prieſt and Law-giver: The *outward* Performances of the Ceremonial Law, repreſented as Emblems of *inward* Purity: The Excellency of the Sacrifice, Miniſtry, and Laws of Chriſt, beyond thoſe of the Moſaical Diſpenſation: The Efficacy of the Death of Chriſt and of the whole Goſpel Diſpenſation, for obtaining Pardon of Sin, Reconciliation to God, and Eternal Life: The Union of the divine and human Nature in Chriſt: The Neceſſity — of his *Incarnation*, to be firſt a Teacher and Example, and after that to be capable of dying; of his *Death*, to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf; of his *Reſurrection*, to prove his Conqueſt over Death, and to be an Earneſt of our riſing from the dead; and of his *Aſcenſion*, to be veſted with all Power in Heaven and Earth, and to be our Mediator, Advocate and Interceſſor at the Right-hand of his Father: The Univerſality and Sufficiency of the Grace promiſed in the Goſpel, decreed by God from the Foundation of the World, and revealed in due Time in the Goſpel, for the Salvation of all true Believers: The Right of Gentiles as well as Jews, to be Partakers of the Mercies and Benefits of the Goſpel Covenant in Chriſt: The Juſtice of God in rejecting the unbelieving Jews and calling the Gentiles: The Neceſſity of Faith in him, in order to our Juſtification in the Sight of God, and the Impoſſibility of obtaining Salvation in any other way than thro' the

the Atonement made by him: The Efficacy of Faith, and the Neceſſity of good Works, as the genuine Fruits of a true and lively Faith: The Sanctification of our Nature by the Spirit of God: The ordinary Operations and Influences of the Holy Spirit; and the Obligation to Love, Peace, Meekneſs, Gentleneſs, and mutual Forbearance, as the Fruits of the Spirit: The Power and Vigilance of our Enemy the Devil and his wicked Spirits; and the great Sinfulneſs of Envy, Detraction, Malice, Hatred and Revenge, as properly the Works of the Devil: The Duty of doing all Things to the Glory of God, by employing our ſeveral Gifts and Talents for that End: The Duty of Repentance from dead Works, of dying to Sin and living to God, and of putting on the new Man, and living, not according to the Fleſh but according to the Spirit: The Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, in order to the ſubduing our inordinate Luſts and Appetites: The abſolute Neceſſity of Holineſs, and the utter Inconſiſtency of Uncleanneſs of all Kinds with the Purity of the Goſpel: The Duty of preſerving the Bond of Marriage ſacred and inviolable: The Nature of the Church of Chriſt upon Earth, and the Communion of Chriſtians with him as their Head, and with one another as Joint Members of his Body: The true Import, due Adminiſtration, and proper Efficacy of the Ordinances inſtituted by him: The Government of his Church, and the Appointment of Paſtors and Teachers therein, to miniſter in holy Things, and to explain to the People the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, and enforce the Duties of it: The publick Worſhip and Diſcipline appointed in his Church, the

firſt to be attended, and the ſecond to be ſubmitted to by all Chriſtians: The Neceſſity of Union among the Members of Chriſt's Church, and the great Miſchief of Diviſions: The Duty of praying for the Wants of *one another* both ſpiritual and temporal: The due Regulation of religious Zeal, and the Danger of a miſguided Zeal: The Duty of preaching, and taking up, the Croſs of Chriſt, and the Miſchiefs of corrupting the Chriſtian Faith by Philoſophy and the Wiſdom of this World: The extreme Danger of Infidelity and Apoſtaſy from the Faith: The diſtinguiſhing Reward of thoſe who ſuffer patiently for the Truth of the Goſpel, and perſevere unto the End: The Relation which good Chriſtians bear to the Saints in Heaven, while they continue upon Earth: The great Happineſs that is there laid up for all the faithful Servants of Chriſt: The Order of the general Reſurrection, and the Changes that will be then made in the Bodies of good Men.

Theſe and the like Heads of Doctrine and Inſtruction which are found in the Epiſtles, being added to the Light which we receive from the Goſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles, give us a compleat View of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation and every Branch of it; the one being the Foundation, and the other the Superſtructure, and both neceſſary to build us up in the true Faith and Doctrine of Chriſt. And whether theſe be all equally neceſſary to be explicitly known and believed, or all equally fundamental, is an uſeleſs and idle Enquiry. Whoever reads the Writings of the Apoſtles, and is perſuaded that the Doctrines they delivered were received from Chriſt, or written by the Direction and Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, cannot

not but think himſelf obliged to believe and do whatever he finds delivered in theſe Writings, and to conſider them as a Divine Rule of Faith and Practice.

As to the Duties merely moral, and ſuch as belong to our ſeveral Stations and Circumſtances in this World, no Infidel has ever been ſo hardy as to deny that the Epiſtles contain a Variety of admirable Precepts and Directions for our Conduct and Behaviour in the ſeveral Relations of Life (for Magiſtrates and People, Wives and Husbands, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants) and alſo in the ſeveral *Conditions* and *Circumſtances* of Life, Riches and Poverty, Health and Sickneſs, Proſperity and Adverſity. Nor need I repeat here what I have ſhewn at large elſewhere, That theſe and the like Duties, as laid down and enjoined in thoſe ſacred Writings, are not only carried to higher Degrees of Perfection than they ever were in the Schools of Morality, but alſo have far greater *Weight* here, as having the Stamp and Sanction of Divine Authority, and as they are enforced by Conſiderations relating to our eternal Happineſs in the next Life, and by Motives immediately reſulting from our Relation to Chriſt, and from the general Doctrines and Principles of the Chriſtian Faith.

Second Paſt. Let. p. 68.

It is true, that the *immediate Occaſion* of ſeveral of the Epiſtles, was the correcting Errors and Irregularities in particular Churches and Countries. Such were ‘ The corrupting Chriſtianity with Mixtures of Judaiſm and Philoſophy, Apoſtaſy from the Faith they had receiv'd, Contentions and Diviſions among themſelves, Neglect of the publick Aſſemblies and Miſbehaviour in them, The deſpiſing of Government,

The diſhonouring of Marriage, The allowing Fornication, &c. And God knows our own times are a ſad Inſtance of the Neceſſity of ſuch Cautions in *all* Ages, and the no leſs Neceſſity of attending to the Duties which are directly oppoſite to thoſe Vices and Irregularities, and which the Apoſtles take *Occaſion* from thence to lay down and enforce. And even their Deciſions of Caſes concerning Meats and Drinks, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, and other like Doubts which were peculiar to the Jewiſh Converts in the firſt *Occaſion* of them; theſe Rules alſo are, and always will be, our ſureſt Guides in all Points relating to Chriſtian Liberty, and the Uſe of things indifferent; when the Grounds of thoſe Deciſions, and the Directions conſequent upon them, are duly attended to, and applied to Caſes of the like Nature by the Rules of Piety and Prudence; or, as a learned Writer expreſſes it, *By* Analogy *and* Parity *of Reaſon*, thoſe *may be extended very profitably to the* general *Behoof and Advantage of other* Churches *of God, and particular Chriſtians of all Ages*; eſpecially, in one Point which is of univerſal Concern in Life, I mean, The Duty of abſtaining from many things which are in themſelves innocent, if we foreſee that they will give Offence to weak Chriſtians, or be the Occaſion of leading others into Sin. Dr. Hammond.

The Sum then of the 6th Head is this; 'That the Apoſtles were entruſted by Chriſt with the making a full and entire Publication of his Goſpel, and inſpir'd by the Holy Ghoſt, to enable them to diſcharge that Truſt: 'That the Books of the New Teſtament were all written or * approv'd by them; 'That Chriſtians in all Ages have thought themſelves obliged to conſider and underſtand

* *The Goſpels of* Mark *and* Luke. *See* p. 11.

underſtand the Nature of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, as they found it explain'd by Perſons thus authoris'd and inſpir'd: and, 'That as ſoon as the ſeveral Books of the New Teſtament appear'd upon clear and evident Proof to be written by the Perſons whoſe Names they bore, all Chriſtian Churches receiv'd them as Inſpir'd Writings, and as a Divine Rule of Faith and Manners.

The Inference from all this, which every one who is a Chriſtian in earneſt ought to make to himſelf, is, To conſider it as his indiſpenſable Duty to *peruſe* and *attend* to thoſe ſacred Books, as explaining to him the Terms of Salvation according to the Goſpel Covenant, and acquainting him with the Conditions requir'd on his Part in order to obtain it. And becauſe the Books of the *Old Teſtament* are alſo the *Oracles* of God deliver'd from time to time to the Jewiſh Nation, and are declar'd by the New Teſtament to be written by divine Inſpiration, and do contain in them many excellent Leſſons of Duty, and a great Variety of Mercies and Judgments ſent upon Men and Nations according to their Obedience or Diſobedience to the Commands of God, and alſo the Accounts of God's Communications with Mankind, and his Dealings with them, from the Creation of the World; together with a Treaſure of Devotions and Meditations of all kinds and for all Conditions, eſpecially in the Book of Pſalms: Let me therefore further intreat you, carefully to peruſe thoſe ſacred Writings; frequently and ſeriouſly meditating upon the various Providences and Diſpenſations of God to Men, and learning from thence to praiſe and adore his Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, and to be careful above all things to recommend yourſelves to his

Favour

Favour and Protection by a ſtrict and uniform Obedience to his Laws. What St. *Paul* ſays of *Timothy*, is a high Commendation of him: *From a Child thou haſt known the* Holy Scriptures, *which are able to make thee wiſe unto Salvation through Faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus:* And then he adds, *All Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God, and is profitable for* Doctrine, *for* Reproof, *for* Correction, *for* Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs: *That the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſh'd unto all good Works.* And as God *has caus'd all Holy Scriptures* (both of the Old and New Teſtament) *to be written for our Learning*, as the Liturgy of our Church expreſſes it; be you always careful, that (in the Words of the ſame Liturgy) *you do in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them, that by Patience and Comfort of his* holy Word, *you may embrace and ever hold faſt the bleſſed Hope of everlaſting Life, which he hath given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.

1 Cor. x. 11.

Collect for ſecond Sunday *in* Advent.

To CONCLUDE:

In this and my two former Letters, I have given you a View of the Chriſtian Religion, and the Evidences of the Truth of it, in as ſhort a Compaſs, and in the plaineſt Manner, I was able; with an Eye, throughout, to the preſent Attempts of Infidels againſt our common Faith, and with a ſincere Deſire to preſerve you from the *Infection*, and to *Eſtabliſh* you in that Faith. I have ſhewn you, 'That the Reveal'd Will of God is your *only* ſure Guide in the Way to Salvation; 'That a full Revelation of his Will, concerning the Method and Terms of your Salvation,

vation, is contain'd in the Writings of the New Teſtament; 'That thoſe Writings are genuine and authentick, and have been faithfully tranſmitted to us; and, 'That if you neglect the Means of Salvation which God has appointed, and ſeek for it in any other Way, you will not only fail of it in the End, but likewiſe render yourſelves inexcuſable in his Sight. I beſeech you therefore to weigh and conſider what I have written for your Uſe, with ſuch Seriouſneſs, Attention, and Impartiality, as the *Importance* of theſe Things moſt manifeſtly requires and deſerves; and to take great Care that your Enquiries after Truth be wholly free from the Influences of Profit or Pleaſure, Pride or Paſſion, and from all Views and Conſiderations whatſoever, except a ſincere Deſire and Intention to *Know* and *Do* the Will of God, in order to ſecure your eternal Salvation. And, that in the Purſuit of this great Work, your own Endeavours may be ever accompanied with the divine Direction and Aſſiſtance, is the hearty and earneſt Prayer of

Your Faithful Friend and Paſtor,

BRITISH 8 00 79 MUSEUM

Edm'. London'.